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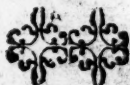
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TWO FIRST
TREATISES
OF THE FIRST PART OF
CHRISTIAN
PERFECTION.
COMPOSED

By the Reuerend Father
ALFONSO RODRIGVEZ.
of the Society of I E S V S.

The one of them being intituled, *Of the Estimation and affection which we ought to carry to spirituall thinges, and to our profiting therein.* And the other, *Of the Perfection of our ordinary Actions.*

Translated out of Spanish
into English.



Permissu Superiorum, M. DC. XXXI

TWO FIRST
PARTS

OF THE FIRST PART OF

COLUMBIAN

REFORMATION

COMPOSED

By the Reverend Father

JOHN RODRIGUES

of the Society of Jesus



Translated out of Spanish

into English

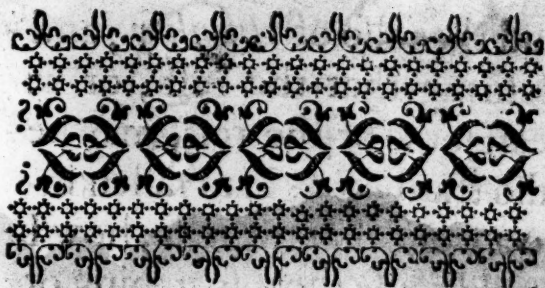
By the same Author

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THE
PREFACE
TO THE
READER.



HAVING formerly
translated some o-
ther Treatises of
this excellent Au-
thour, as namely that of *Pray-*
er, that of the *Presence of God*,

The Preface

and that also of *Humility* ; and desiring that the rest , or at least some of the rest, may be also translated ; I am fallen into a wonder at my selfe, how I could misse the dispatching of these two first Treatises, which in his workes are the first ; namely that, *Of the great estimation of spirituall thinges, and of the affection, which Christians ought to carry towards their owne spirituall good*. And that other, which treates, *Of the perfection of mans vsual, and ordinary actions*. I say, I wondred at my selfe, because whatsoever was to follow, these two, in all reason, were to haue byn the
the

to the Reader .

the first . Not only because they haue that ranke of precedence with the Authour ; but for that the subiect therof, will be sure to giue a good account of it selfe, by preparing and opening mens hartes , and by leauing a kind of tincture and impression vpon them, whilst they are reading any other part of his Workes . For certainly , if he put a very high value vpon spirituall thinges , and vpon his owne good , and profit in the way of spirit , it will induce him , to be the more carefull of making his Prayer with great deuotion , and of maintayning the Pre

The Preface

sence of God with exact attention, and of walking with profound humility in the sight of his diuine Maiesty; and in fine it will breed a greater solicitude in him, that he may neither commit any ill, nor omit to exercise any good, which he shall find to be in order, towards so excellent an end.

In like manner, when we read any spirituall discourse, this Treatise of the *Perfection of the ordinary actions of a good Christian*, will flow with full influence vpon our soules, by working good & great effects therein: for whatsoeuer we
may

To the Reader .

may haue iust occasion to do,
when we shall vnderstand (as
this Treatise will teach vs)
that it is no such impossible
thing to be a perfect man, or
at least, for one to gayne so
much vpon himselfe, as day-
ly to be lesse, and lesse im-
perfect. And I imagine, that
it may fall out with some o-
thers, as I confesse it hath
done in some parts of my life
with me, who thought, that
Perfection was either some
phantafticall and ayry thing,
which had no solide being a-
mongst men in this world, but
was reserued for Saints in the
next; or els, that if it had any

The Preface

such solide being, and indeed were practicable in this life, yet it was like some huge Giant, who would neuer in effect be subdued; or else like some lowre & vntractable Prince, to whome it was almost impossible, for ordinary men to haue accesse. Now the later of the following Treatises, will serue, to let any man see euen with halfe an eye, that these conceits of myne, were ignorant and vaine; if indeed they may not rather be most iustly accounted to be full of danger and deceit. For heere, it will most euidently appeare, that the perfection of a Christian

to the Reader .

stian Catholike man , is neither *Chimera*, or phantastical thing, but such a one , as hath a reall being, yea and , by the mercy of Almighty God, findes place in millions of their mindes, who apply themselves seriously , to his seruice ; and withall, that it is no bugbeare , nor hath any thing in it of the dreadfull , or frightfull, or impracticable . But it consists of these two only partes: The one, that a mans state of life be lawfull, and chosen according to the good will of God . And the other that his ordinary actions of praying, studying, pleading, curing,

The Preface

conuersing, sayling, ploughing, sowing, eating, sleeping, yea and recreating, and whatsoever els a man of such a state may lawfully do, be respectiue-ly performed, according to the Perfection, which belongs to those seuerall actions. A man, I say, is not expresse-ly bound, in the quality of aspiring to be a perfect Christian, to do extraordinary things beyond those, which are required by the lawfull state wherein he is; as for example, to performe certain grievous abstinences and austerities, which are not incident to his state, but only to execute
with

to the Reader .

with perfection, all such things, as are belonging to it, according to the obligations therof. And this is that which the later of these two following Treatises doth not only make vs vnderstand and see, but euen touch, as it were, and feele, with our very fingers ends .

And though both these Treatises, and all the rest of this excellent Authour, were principally designed to the vse of the Religious of his owne Order (of whome I must euer be taking occasion, to affirme, that they deserue the more highly to be reuerenced

The Preface

ced by the whole world, for that we see by such workes as these, how diligently and substantially they are instructed, and addrest within doores, towards the exact performāce of all Religious Perfection) yet it is euident, both by the expresse Preface of the Author, and euen by the nature of the thinges themselues, that the documents, which he giues, are most vsfull and very applyable to all Catholike Christians whatsoeuer, if they will aspire, as they ought, towards Christian Perfection in their seuerall states. Heere therefore now, are these two
Treati-

To the Reader .

Treatises translated and presented to you, and I commend them to your perusal, & my selfe to your pardon, wherein soeuer I may haue fallen short of my Authour.

THE

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THE

**THE
FIRST
TREATISE.**

THE

FIRST

TRISTE.



THE FIRST
TREATISE
OF THE
ESTIMATION,
AFFECTION,
AND DESIRE,

Which we are to carry to that which
may concerne our spirituall profit;
and of some thinges in particuler
which are to help vs in order
to this end.

*Of the value, and estimation which we
ought to put vpon spirituall thinges.*

CHAP. I.



IN the seauenth Chap-
ter of the booke of Wi-
sedome, the Wise man
sayth : Optaui, & datus
est mihi sensus; & inuoca-
ui, & venit in me spiritus
sapientia; & proposui illam regnis & sedi-

Sap. 7. 7.

2^d The I. Treatise, Chap. I.

bus; & diuitias nihil esse duxi in comparatione illius, nec comparavi illi lapidem pretiosum, quoniam omne aurum in comparatione illius, arena est exigua, & tamquam lutum aestimabitur argentum in conspectu illius. I desired vnderstanding and it was giuen me; I begged it of God, and it was imparted to me; and I esteemed it more then Royall scepters and Thrones; and I valued not riches or pretious stones in comparison thereof; for all such thinges, are but as some very little sand, and siluer is but durt if it be compared with this. That true wisdome, towards which we are too looke, is Christian perfection, and it consists in vniting vs to Almighty God by loue, according to that of the Apostle

Ad Coloss.

3. 14.

S. Paul: Super omnia autem haec, Charitatem habete, quod est vinculum perfectionis. Aboue all thinges I recommend Charity to you, which is the knot or bond of perfection. That estimation therfore which Salomon had of Wisdome, the same ought we to haue of Perfection, and of whatsoeuer tendes to the obtaining therof. In comparison of this, al must be held by vs, to be no better then a little sand, or durt, yea or euen dunge,

Of our estimation of spir. thinges. 3
as the Apollile himseife sayd: *Omnia ar-* *Ad Philip.*
bitror stercora, vt Christum lucrificiam. 3. 8.

This is a very principall meanes for the obtayning of perfection. For after the same rate, according to which this estimation shall walke on in our hartes, after the same pace will our spirituall profit walke, and after that rate will this House, and indeed our whole Order prosper. The reason heerof is, because according to the value which we put vpon any thing, is also the desire which we haue therof. For the *VWill*, is but a kind of blind power, and only fals vpon that, which the *Vnderstanding* dictats, & propounds to it, and according to the estimation, and value which the *Vnderstanding* giues, the *VWill* conceaues a desire for the obtayning therof. And for as much as the *VWill* is as a Queene, which commands all the other faculties & powers, both interiour and exterior of the soule; therefore according to the *VWill* and desire which we haue to doe any thing, we are wont to procure it and to vse meanes & diligence to acquire it. And therefore it importes very much

4 The 1. Treatise, Chap. 1.

that the estimation and value of spirituall things, and of all that which be-
longes to our good in this kind, be
great, to the end that the Will and
desire thereof, & the diligence to pro-
cure and obtaine it, may be also great;
for all these things vse to walke to-
geather, hand in hand.

He who deales in pearles, & pre-
tious stones, must know and esteeme
them, according to their true value,
vpon the price of being deceaued. For
if he know not, and vnderstand them
not, he may exchange and sell some
stone of high price, for a toy. Our ne-
gotiation is concerning pearles, and
pretious stone: *Simile est regnum Calo-*

Math. 13.
45.

*rum, homini negotiatori, querenti bonas
Margaritas.* We negotiate for the king-
dome of heauen, and we must know,
and be able to esteeme the price, and
value of this Marchandise, least other-
wise we be deceaued, by exchanging
gold for durt, and heauen for earth,
which would be an vnspeakable and
most absurd errour. And so sayth the

Ierem. 9.
23.

*Prophet Hieremy: Non gloriatur Sapiens
in sapientia sua; & non gloriatur Fortis in
fortitudine*

Of our estimation of spir. thinges. 7
fortitudine sua; & non gloriatur Dives in
diuitijs suis: sed in hoc gloriatur, qui glori-
atur scire, & nosse me. Let not the Wise
man glory in his wisdom, nor the Strong
man in his strength, nor the Rich man in his
wealth: but let him glory who hath a mind
to glory, in vnderstanding and knowing me.
This is the greatest of all treasures; to
know, and loue, and serue God is the
highest busines which we can haue,
or rather we haue no other busines but
this; for we were created for this, &
we are come to be Religious men for
this. This is our end, and this must
be our ayme, and heerein our ease, &
glory must consist.

I desire therefore, that the estima-
tion and value of perfection, and of all
spirituall things which belonges to it,
may be deeply imprinted in the hartes
of all Christians, and especially of Re-
ligious men; and that we may all goe
helping and awaking one another, in
order to this end; & this, not only by
wordes, when we are in ordinary co-
uersation, or discourse: but much
more, by the example of our actions,
to the end that by them, both such as

6 *The I. Treatise. Chap. I.*

are but beginners, and such as are proficient, and all in fine may clearly see, that the matter whereof we make account heere in Religion, is spirituall thinges, and that a man be very humble, very obedient, and much giuen to recollection and prayer, & not that he be very learned, or a famous Preacher, or indewed with other naturall or humane gifts, as our B. Father Ignatius aduises vs, in the Constitutions. In the very beginning, it is fit that all men may vnderstand, and that they be fed and nursed with this milke; that from that instant, euery one be found to place his eyes, and his hart, not vpon prouing some great learned man, or some famous Preacher: but in being full of humility, and mortification, that so they may perceauce, that this is that, which is esteemed heere, and whereof we make much account, & that vpon which, such men as are vn- beguiled, fall; and that these in fine be the men, who are beloued and esteemed by all the rest. I say not, that we must apply our selues to a course of vertue, to the end that we may be be-
loved

10. Part.
Const. §.
2. Reg. 16
summary.

Of our estimation of spir. things. 7

loued and esteemed; but that, obseruing, that this is the thing which is esteemed, and that whereof we make most account in Religion, euery one may fall vpon the reckoning, and discern that this, without doubt, is best; this is that which is fit for me; by this way, I shall goe safe; I will apply my selfe wholly to vertue, and I will seriously procure myne owne spirituall good, for I see that without this, all is trash.

Heereby we may easily vnderstand, how much hurt they doe, who in their ordinary conuersation, and discourse, make it their busines, to treat of mens wit, abilities, and tallents; and to qualify men for this or that, at their pleasure. For when yong men see, that this is the language of the more ancient, they presently may conceiue, that this is the money which is currant heere; that by this meanes, they must thriue, and be valued, and so they fix their eye vpon this object; and the account, and estimation of wit, learning, and ability of that kind, goeth on increasing with them, and the value and estimation

8 The 1. Treatise. Chap. 1.

tion of vertue, mortification, and humility decayes, and so they make little account of one in cōparison of the other, and resolute rather to be wanting in pursuite of the former, then of the latter. By meanes heereof, many grow to decay, and afterward to fall in state of Religion. Much better it were to discourse of how important and necessary it were for them, to obtaine vertue, and humility, and of how little vse without it, other abilities and learning would be, or rather, to say better, how much they would hurt; and not by such discourses, to ingender in their minds an appetite of honour, and an itch to set themselves out, and to be held for men of choice wit, and of great talents, which vses to be the beginning of their perdition.

Surius.

Surius brings, a good example to this purpose, out of the life of *S. Fulgentius* the Abbot. He saith that this holy Prelate, when he saw that any of his Religious were great labourers, and wrought hard all day long, to assist in the occasions of the howse, but yet perceived on the other side, that they were
not

Of our estimation of spir. things. 9

not so diligent in their spirituall im-
ployments, and that they tooke not so
much care of their reading, their pray-
er, and their spirituall recollection, he
loued not, nor esteemed not these men
so much, as not being worthy thereof.
But when he saw any man carryed
with great affection towards his spiri-
tuall actions, and to be full of care con-
cerning his profit in that kind, though
on the other side he were not so fit for
other busines of the howse, yea though
he were good for nothing, in regard of
his infirmity and weaknes yet the Hi-
storian saith that he carryed a particular
affection & estimation towards such
a one, and that with reason. For, to
what purpose serues it, that a mā should
be of great parts and talents, if withall,
he be not plyant and obedient, and if
the Superiour may not dispose of him
as he thinks fit, especially if the other
be such a one withall, as that he will
perhaps take occasion thereby, to seeke
certayne liberties, and procure exemp-
tions; for it were better that such a one,
had neuer had such abilities & talents.
If the Superiour were to giue account
to

to God, whether the persons committed to his charge, had been very practi-
call, and of great parts, it were a differ-
rent case; for of this, he shall giue no
account. But the question wil be, what
care he hath taken, that his charge
might profit in Spirit, and that euery
one might dayly goe increasing in ver-
tue, according to those parts & talents,
which our Lord had imparted to eue-
ry one; and that they might be so im-
ployed in their ministeries, and offices,
as not to loose any part of their spiritu-
all profit thereby. And of the same will
God also demaund an account, at the
subjects hands. Certainly (saith that
other Saint) we shall not be asked at
the day of iudgment, what we haue
read, but what we haue done; nor
how elegantly we haue spoken, but
how vertuously we haue liued.

*Thomas de
Kempis li.
1. de con-
cept. mē-
di. cap. 3.*

Christ our Lord, had sent his dis-
ciples to preach, and the holy Ghospell
recounts, that they returned home full
of complacence and contentment, say-
ing, *Lord we haue done strange things, and
wrought miracles, yea euen the very Diuells
haue beene obedient, and subiect to vs, in thy*

name.

Of our estimation of spir. things. 11

Mathe. But the Redeemer of the world
made them this answer: *In hoc nolite Luc. 10.*
gaudere, quia spiritus vobis subiunguntur: 20.
gaudete autem, quod nomina vestra scripta
sunt, in calis. Do not place your hart, and
joy, vpon your doing wonderfull things, and
vpon working miracles, & vpon commaun-
ding Diuells, and in that they obey you, but
reioyce and glory in this, that your names are
written in the booke of life. We must place
our whole contentment, & our whole
joy, in acquiring and obeyning the
Kingdome of heauen; for that other,
without this, will do vs no good. *Quid Math. 10.*
anim prodest homini si vniuersum mundum 26.
lucreretur, anima verò sua detrimentum pa-
tiatur? VVhat good would it doe a man, to
gaine the whole world, if with all, he should
lose his owne soule?

But now, if we, or rather indeed
Christ our Lord himselfe say this, of
those spirituall employments and mi-
nisteries, whereby soules are gayned,
and conuerted to God; and that, euen
for this, we must not forget our owne
spirituall good, because it will not
turne vs to account though yet withal,
we should conuert the whole world;
what

what can be said, of that other kind of employments? There is no reason, that a Religious man should be so absorpt, and swallowed vp by his studyes, or so violently carryed away by exterior busines, as that he forget his own good, his prayer, his examen of Conscience, his exercise of mortification, his penance, and that spirituall things should haue the last and lowest place, and the worst tyme with him, and that if any thing be left vndone, it be those; for this were to liue without spirit, & not like a Religious man.

S. Dorotheus. *S. Dorotheus* recounts, how he made one *Dositheus* a disciple of his, *Infirmarian*, who was very diligēt in his office, and had great care of sicke persons, their beds well made, and their chambers well dressed, and all was very cleanly and well composed. And *Dorotheus* going one day to visit the *Infirmarie*, *Dositheus* said thus to him: Father a thought of vaine glory would faine come towards me, which saith thus: *How well is al this accomodated, & how well contented will thy Superiour be with thee?* But *Dorotheus* made him this answer, which

Of our estimation of spir. things. 12

which freed him of his vaine glory
with a witnes. *Dositheus*, thou hast serued
well; *Non tamen bonus, & probus effectus
es Monachus*. Thou hast proued a very good &
diligent Infirmarian, but thou hast not pro-
ued a good Religious man. Let euery man
take heed, that no such thing may be
said of him: Thou hast proued a good
Infirmarian, or a good Porter, a good
Student, a good Scholler, a good Prea-
cher, but not a good Religious man.
No, no; we came not hither for these
things, but to be good Religious men.
This is that which we ought to e-
steeme, and procure, and to carry euer
before our eyes; and we are to esteeme
all other things, to be but as accesso-
ries, and additions to this, of our owne
spirituall profit; according to those
words of Christ our Lord, *Querite ergo Math. 6.
primum regnum Dei, & iustitiam eius, & 33.
hac omnia adicientur vobis.*

We read of those Fathers of the de-
fert, that because they could not al-
waies be reading, or meditating, or
praying, they imployed the tyme
which aduanced to them therein,
vpon making baskets, and such other
handy

Refert
Cassian. de
Abbato
Paulo lib.
10. cap. 24.

handy works; that so they might not be idle; and some of them, at the yeares end, set all that on fire, which they had made, because they had no vse thereof, for their sustenance; but they laboured onely, that they might fill vp the vacāt spaces of tyme, & not be idle. So that, on which we are principally to place our eyes, is our owne spiritual profit, and as for other imployments & busines though it should be vndertaken euen for the good of our neighbours we must do it in such sort as these holy Men made little basketts, not that vpon any such reason we must neglect or forget our selues, or loose a hayres breadth of perfection. And therefore we must euer goe vpon this foundation, and esteeme it for the very first principle, that we euer put those spirituall exercises which concerne our owne profiting, in the first place, and not omit them vpon any occasion. For this is that which must conserue vs and carry vs on towards vertue, & if this be wanting, we shall quickly see how much we decay. And we haue experience inough, that whensoever we
are

Of our estimation of spir. things. 15
 are not as we ought, it is euer because
 we haue beene slacke in our spirituall
 exercises. *Atuit cor meum quia oblitus sum Psal. 101.*
comedere panem meum. If the food and
 nourishment of our soules be wanting,
 it is euident enough, that we must be
 fainte & weake. And so our B. Father, 3. p. Cōf.
 doth often admonish & put vs in mind
 heereof. In one place he tells vs: That
 the study which they of the Nouitiate, and
 indeed all shall vse, must be of that which
 may concerne the abnegation of themselues,
 and their increase in vertue and perfection.
 In another place he saith: Let all men set
 out fit tymes, for spirituall things; and en-
 deauour to performe them with as much de-
 uotion, as the grace of our Lord shall impart
 to them. Elsewhere he directs, that all
 men imploy all that tyme with all di-
 ligence in our Lord, which is deputed
 to prayer, or meditation, and spirituall
 reading: & heere let that word be no-
 ted, *All diligence.*

So that heereby we may perceiue,
 that in how many busineses soeuer,
 either Obedience, or a mans office may
 imploy him, yet it is not the will of
 Superiours, that he should omit his
 owne

3. p. Cōf.
 c. 1. 9. 27.
 & Reg. 12.
 Summary
 Const.

Reg. 21.
 Summary.

Reg. 1. Cō-
 muniū.

owne spirituall exercises; for there is no Superiour who can desire that any man should breake his Rules, & Rules which are so principall as these. And therefore let no man pretend to couer, yea or to colour his imperfection, and negligence in his spirituall exercises, with the veile or cloake of Obedience; by saying, that he could not make his Prayer, or his examen, or performe his spirituall reading, because he was imployed otherwise by Obedience; for it is not Obedience which hindred it, but the negligence, or little affection, of such a one, to performe spirituall things. *S. Basil* sayth, that we must be very faithfull, and punctuall, in giuing God those tymes, which we haue set out to God for prayer, and for the rest of our spirituall exercises. And if, at any tyme, by reason of any precise occasion, we could not possibly make our Prayer, or our Examen at the appointed hower, we must remayne with a great hungar and desire to supply, and repaire it instantly, or at least as soone as possibly we can; as when we want the ordinary prouision of

*Basilus
ser. de re-
nunciatio-
ne seculi
i. tunc, &
spirituali
profect.*

Of our estimation of spir. things. 17

of our necessary food or sleep, as (for examples sake) when we haue bene all night, with some sicke man, confessing him, and helping him to dy well, we instantly procure the rest which we wanted, and we will not lacke tyme, wherein to do it. This is the will of Superiours, when sometymes they giue a man other busines, whilest some spirituall exercise should haue byn performed, because so it was necessary at that time; but their meaning is not thereby, that their exercises of Spirit should be omitted, but only deferred, & supplied compleatly afterward, according to that of the Wise man, *Ne impediarius orare semper*; Be not hindred from praying continually. He saith not, do not hinder your selfe; But be not hindred. Let there be no occasion or impediment, which may, at any time, deprive you of making your Prayer. Nor indeed is there euer any to the good Religious man, for he will euer be sure to find tyme, to supply and repaire it.

It is related of S. Dorotheus, that being then by office to entertaine such strangers as arrived, and ryng some-

Ecd. 18.

22.

S. Dorothe.

Ser. seu

du. i. 110

in Biblio-

theca sct.

Patrum.

10. 3.

B

tymes

tymes by night, to serue them, yet neuertheles he rose, with all the rest, at their tyme of Prayer, and he had intreated one of the company to awake him, because the man whose office it was to call them all, forbore to do it, in regard he knew the busines whercin the other had bene imployed, and yet this Saint, was not wholly recouered then of a feauer. Such was the good desire he had, not to be wanting in his spirituall exercises, and not to take hold of euery light occasion, and then to be out of order, all the day after. And it is also recounted there, of a holy old man who saw an Angell giuing a kind of incense vpon all them who had diligently made their Prayer; as also to all their voyd places, who had bene hindered from being there, by any occasion imposed vpon Obedience; but not of them who were absent through their owne negligence. This is a good example for the confort of them, who by reason of the imployments of Obedience, are at any tyme disabled, from performing their spirituall exercises in company of the rest; and to the end
that

Of our estimation of spir. things. 19
that we may procure not to be wanting therein, through our owne fault.

Of the affection and desire, which we must carry to Vertue and Perfection.

C H A P. II.

BEATI qui esuriunt & sitiunt iustitiam, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after iustice, because they shall be satisfied. This name of iustice, though it belong particularly to one of those foure Cardinall Vertues which is distinct from the rest; yet is it also a name common to all sanctity and vertue. We call a good and vertuous life, by the name of *Iustice*, and of one who is holy and vertuous, we say that he is a *Iust man*. *Iustitia rectorum liberabit eos*, saith the wiseman. His meaning is, that the vertue and sanctity of their liues, shall deliuer them; and so also is it taken in many other places of holy Scripture: *Nisi abundauerit iustitia vestra, plusquam Scribarum & Pharisaeorum*. If your Iustice shall not prooue greater, then that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you

Math. 5.

6.

Prov. 11.
6.

Math. 23.
20.

36 The 1. Treatise, Chap. II.

shall not enter into the Kingdome of heauen, saith Christ our Saviour, which is as much, as if he had said: If your vertue, your piety, and your Sanctity, be not greater then theirs. In the same manner, is that also to be vnderstood, which Christ our Lord said to S. Iohn Baptist,

Math. 3.
15.

when S. Iohn refused to baptize him: *Sic enim decet nos, implere omnem iustitiam.* In

this manner is it fit for vs, to giue example of Obedience, of Humility, and of all perfection. And thus is the word *iustitia* to be taken, in this present place. Well then, saith Christ our Lord: Those men are blessed who carry a desire and loue, to perfection; and vertue, and who hunger and thirst after it, because they shall obtraine it, and be fulfilled with it, and satisfied by it; and this is one of the eight Beatitudes, which he taught vs, and which he preached to vs, in that admirable Sermon of the Mount. S.

Hieronim.

Herome vpon these wordes, sayth: Non nobis sufficit velle iustitiam, nisi iustitia patiamur famem. It suffices not for vs to haue an ordinary desire of vertue, and perfection, but we must haue such a hunger and thirst after it, as that we may be able to say with
the

Of our estimation of spir. things. 22

the Prophet: *Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te Deus.* Even as the hart being hunted, and buri by the Huntsman, desires to betake himselfe to the springs of water; iust so doth my hart desire thee, O my God. Ps. 41.2.

This is a thing of so great importance, that as we sayd in the last Chapter, our whole spirituall profit depends vpon it; and this is the beginning and only meanes of obtayning Perfection, according to that of the Wiseman: *Lex sapientium est disciplina concupiscentia.* Sap. 6.18. The beginning to obtayne wisdom (which is the knowledge & loue of God wherein our perfection consists) is the true, sincere, and cordiall desire thereof. And the reason of this, is because as the Philosophers say, in all things and especially in all morall actions, the loue and desire of the end, is the chiefe cause, which setteth all other causes on worke; and this in such sort, that how much the greater the loue & desire of the end is, so much will the desire and diligence for obtayning of the end be greater. So that it much importes, that our affection and desire to

obtaine

obtaine Perfection be great, that so our care and diligence to obtaine the same, may be also great.

It is so important & euen necessary for our spirituall profit, that this desire of ours be rooted in our very harts, and may euen as it were transport vs, and that there be no need to be euer calling vpon vs for this purpose, that whosoever hath not this, there will be very little hope of him. Let vs put the case of some Religious man, and so euerly one of vs may apply this doctrine to himselfe, according to his state. It is good and necessary for the state of Religion, that there be a care and vigilancy in Superiours ouer their subiects; & it will be needful to vse reprehensions, and to impose pennances; but yet, when a man performes things but vpon these motiues, you must not rely much vpon him, for such a one will at the most carry himselfe well but for a fit, whilst mens eyes are on him; but if the action proceed not from the hart, and from a true desire of spirituall profit, you are not to esteeme much thereof; for it will not last.

This

Of our estimation of spir. things. 23

This is the difference betweene those things, which are mooued by a violent motion, and those others, which mooue naturally. For the former rising from an extrinsecall impression and force, how much the further they goe, so much more do they lessen & decline; as when a stone is throwne vpward. But in those things, which are mooued by a naturall motion, as when a stone goes downeward towards the center, it is iust the contrary; for this, the further it goes, the faster it mooues. Now this is also the difference betweene them, who doe thinges for feare of pennance and reproofe, or else perhaps, because men are looking on, or in fine for some other humane respect, and such others as are mooued by their loue of vertue, and through their meere desire to please God; that those worke not, but as long as the reprehension lasts, and as long as men are looking on, & then they quickly giue ouer. As *S. Gregory* relates of *Gordiana* an Aunt of his, who being reprooued by two sisters of hers, *Tarilla* and *Emilia*, about certaine liberty, which she

Greg. homil. 38. in Euangel.

24 The 1. Treatise. Chap. 11.

tooke; and because she maintayned not that grauity, which might become the Religious habit, which she had taken; as long as the reproofe lasted, she shewed them a countenance of great respect, and seemed to take the office well at their hands; but instantly after that, she would cast her counterfeit grauity aside, and spend her time in idle talke, and mirth in company of certaine lay-virgins, who were then in that monastery. This was, as when a bow is bent with a stiffe string, for when the string growes weake, so also doth the bow, & it returnes to his former state. And when our actions proceed not from the hart, but are violent, they cannot last.

This purchase of perfection is not a businesse, which goes by force, but it must grow from within; and so sayd Christ our Lord to that young man of
 Math. 19. the Gospell: *Si vis perfectus esse*, if thou
 21. wilt be perfect. But if men haue not a mind to it, all those diligences and meanes, which their Superiours may be able to vse for that purpose, will not serue the turne. And this is the answer
 and

Of our estimation of spir. things. 25

and solution of that demaund of S. Bonaventura. *Bonaventura opusc. de perfect. Religiosorum li. 1. c. 39.* What might be the cause, why anciently one Superiour served to governe a thousand, three thousand, and sometimes ten thousand Monkes, (For so do S. Hierome and S. Augustin affirme) and that now one Superiour is hardly able to governe ten men, and sometimes not so many? The reason of this novelty is, that those ancient Mōks had such a lively and faithfull desire of Perfection in their harts, that the flame which they had there within, made them set vp their whole rest, ypon profiting in spirit, and walking on with great fervour. *Fulgebant iusti, & tamquam scintilla in arundinetis discurrent.* *Sapient. 31*

By this Metaphore, the holy Ghost doth excellently declare the great speed and spirit, wherewith iust men walke on, in the way of vertue, when once this fire is kindled in their harts. They will runne, sayth he, like so many sparkes of fire through a bancke or bed of reedes. And now consider, with what speed this is done; for iust so will iust men runne on in the way of vertue, when once they are kindled and

set on fire by this diuine loue. And so were those ancient Monkes made; and therefore they had no need of any Superiour for that purpose, but rather for the moderating of their feruours. But on the other side, when this fire is wāting, not only one Superiour is not able to gouerne ten Religious, but ten Superiors are not able to gouerne one; nor to make him perfect, vnlesse he list. This is very euident in it selfe. For example. What good will it do for a man to be visited in the time of his prayer, for when the visiter is gone by, may not the other employ himselfe better or worse, as he thinkes fit? And whilst he is there vpon his knees, may he not passe the houre in thinking vpon his study, or some businesse, or, in fine, vpon impertinent things? And when he goes to giue account of his Conscience out of Cōfession, may he not say what he listes, and affirme, that thinges go well with him, when yet indeed they go otherwise? For all this is lost labour, if he haue no mind to be perfect, & if he do not seriously desire it.

And here that comes well in, which
once.

once S. Thomas of Aquin answered to a sister of his, who asked, what she might do to be saued. For the Saint told her : *That she might be saued, if she would.* And so, if you will, you may be saued, if you will, you may profit, & if you wil, you may be perfect. The difficulty of the businesse consists in that you be cōtent to desire it, & that you do it in earnest; and from your hart: For as for God, he is on his part, very ready to assist vs all, but if this be wanting, all that Superiours can do, is but in vaine. Your selues are the men, who must take your spirituall profit to hart; for it is your owne businesse, and it is you who are concerned in it; and for this you come to be Religious. And let euery one of you take knowledge of this, that the day wherein you shall forget, & grow saynt in the care of your selues, and of that, which may importe your spirituall profit, and forbear the care of performing your spirituall exercises well, and of keeping your desire of improuement aliue, and quicke in you, and of proceeding in vertue, and in the mortification of your selues, that very day your businesse is lost. And so our

1. p. lib. 3.
c. 37. hist.
Predicatio-
rum.

Promiss Father in the beginning of the Consti-
Constit. 6. tutions and Rules, layd this for the
 1. ground in this manner. *The interiour law*
of Charity, which the Holy Ghost imprints in
the hart, is that which must conserue and go-
uerne and carry vs on in the way, which we
beginne to hold of his diuine seruice. This
 fire of the loue of God, and the desire
 of his greater honour and glory, is that
 which must be euer solliciting vs, to
 ascend and passe on, to the perfection
 of vertue.

When indeed this desire is in the
 hart, it makes vs employ great dili-
 gence and care, for the obtayning of
 what we desire. For our inclination is
 wont to be very industrious in the see-
 king and finding out thinges desired;
 and it will neuer want meanes, for the
 acquiring thereof; and for this reason,
Sapient. 6. the Wise-man said, that the beginning
 18. of obtaining vertue, was this cordiall,
 and sincere desire thereof.

Moreouer the growing of this de-
 sire out of the hart, brings another be-
 nefit which makes it to be so efficaci-
 ous a meanes; and this is, that how
 hard soeuer the things may be in them-
 selves,

selues, this makes them become easy & sweet. And if this be denyed, I pray you tell me, how it came to be so easy for you, to forsake the world, and to enter into Religion; but only that your desire came from the hart? Our Lord gaue you so great an affection and will to it, (which was the grace of your vocation) that he deprived you of all loue to worldly things, and lodged it vpon this state of Religion; and made it easy for you, by this meanes. And why, on the other side, are these things so very hard to them, who liue yonder in the world? But because God gaue not the this affection and will, and euen themselves can say, *that God hath not called them*, nor giuen them this grace of vocation. Now therefore, as for the entering into Religion, he facilitated your will for you, & made your desire thereof so great, as that neyther your parents, nor friends, nor the whole world were able to hinder you; so also for the profiting in this Religious course, and to the end, that the exercises thereof, may be made easy to you, it will be necessary; that the same will and desire
of

30 The 1. Treatise. Chap. II.

of yours continue, which brought you hither; for as long as that shall last, they will all be easy; but when that once fayles, the easiest thinges will seeme hard, and all will grow to be vp-hill. And this is the reason, why at sometimes, we find our selues so heauy, and at others so well disposed. Let no man cast the fault vpon the thinges, or vpon Superiours, but vpon themselves, and vpon their owne little vertue and mortification.

The Father, Doctour *Anila*. sayth thus. *A healthy, and strong man, lifts vp a great weight at ease, but a child or sickly person, will cry out, euen vpon sight thereof.*

*M. Anila
en cl Epi-
stolaris 1.
p. epist. 2.*

This is the true cause of all our difficulty; For the things are still the same; & at other times the same things were easy to vs., and then they did not cost vs., so much as one sad thought. The fault is all our owne; for wheras we should be men, and growne vp to Perfection, *in virum perfectum*, as *S. Paul* sayth, we are but children, in the way of vertue, and we are but sickly & weake in that desire of perfection, which we had, when we came to be Religious.

*Ad Ephes.
4. 13.*

That

That the hauing a great desire to profit, is a very principall meanes, and a good disposition to induce our Lord to do vs many fauours.

CHAP. III.

IT also importes vs much to haue this desire, and this hunger & thirst after our spirituall profit, becaute this is one of the most principall meanes, and one of the best dispositions, which on our partes, we are able to procure, that so our Lord may vouchsafe vs that vertue and perfection, which we desire. S. Ambrose expresse himselfe thus: *V*Vhen a man hath a great desire of his spirituall profit, and to increase in vertue and perfection, God takes so much delight in this, that he enriches & filles him with benedictions, and fauours. And for prooffe heereof, he bringes that of the most sacred Virgin in her Canticle: *E*surientes impleuit bonis. He filles the hungry with good thinges. And the Prophet had sayd the same before: *Q*uia satiauit animam inanem, id est, sitibundam & esurientem animam satiauit bonis. Our Lord enriches

Ambro. ser.

3. super

Psal. 118.

Luce. 1. 53.

Psal. 106.

9.

and

22 The III. Treatise. Chap. 1.

and fullfills with spiritual graces, such persons as haue a great desire and thirst of vertue and perfection, because he much delights in the true desires of the hart.

The Angel Gabriell appeared to Daniell

Den. 9. 23 & told him; that his prayers had byn heard from the beginning: *Quia vir desideriorum es. Because thou art a man of desires.* And God confirmed the king-

2. Reg. 7. dome to David, and to his descendents,
12. & 13. for the affectiō & desire, which he had
& 16. to build a house, and Temple for him,

thogh yet it were not his pleasure that David, but his sonne Salomon should build it; but howsoeuer, he greatly accepted of this desire, & rewarded it as wel, as if he had done the thing. And

the holy Ghospell recountes of Zachaus, that he desired to see Iesus, and that Iesus saw him first; and he invited himselfe to him, and entred within the gates of his house.

In the sixth Chapter of the Booke of Wisedome, King Salomon speakes more highly of this point, when he discourses of that Wisedome, which is

Jap. 6. 13 God himselfe: *Facile videtur ab his qui diligunt eam, & inuenitur ab his, qui qua-*

runt

Of our estimation of spir. things. 23

veni illam. He sayth: That *VV*isedome
is easily to be seene by them, who loue it, &
to be found by them, who seeke it. But wil
you know indeed, how easily? *Præoc-*
cupat, qui se concupiscunt. vt illis se prior
ostendat. She exposes her selfe, and pre-
uents them, by whome she is desired indeed,
that so she may be the first to shew her selfe.
You haue hardly euen begunne to de-
sire her, when already she is with you:
Qui de luce vigilauerit ad illam, non labo-
rabit, assidentem enim illam, foribus suis
inueniet. He who can be content to ryse
early to seeke her, shall not labour much be-
fore he find her, by casting about for her,
heere and there; for at the very opening of
the gates of his house, he shall find her sitting
there, in expectation to see, when they will
be opened. So that the first, he is to
meet, will be this diuine *Wisedome*,
which is no lesse then God himselfe.
O infinite mercy and bounty of God!
He is not cōtent with going in search
after vs, but he will needes come and
knocke at our gate, with desire that
we may open to him. *Ecce sto ad ostium*
& pulso. Behould, for it is I who am knock-
ing heere, sayth our Lord in the Apo-
calypse,

Apo. 3. 20

Cant. 5. 2.

calipse. And in the Canticles he sayth:
Aperi mihi, soror mea. Open the doore, O my sister. Nay, he is not content with this: but as one, who might be weary with hauing stayd so long. God sets himselfe downe at our doores, giuing vs thereby to vnderstand, that he would fayne haue entred before, if he had not found the doore shut; and that yet for all this, he goes not thence, but sits expecting still, that so instantly vpon the opening, you & he may meet:
Assidentem enim illam foribus suis inueniet.

Isa. 30. 18

Though you haue delayed to open your hart to God, and to corresponde with his holy inspirations; neuertheless God is not yet gone away, as hauing more desire to enter in, then so. He sits yet still, at the gate in expectation, that you may open to him:
Expectat Dominus, vt misereatur vestri.
 Our Lord expects still, that he may shew you mercy. Nor is there in the whole world any friend, who so desires to enter into the house of his friend, as the God of heauen and earth desires to enter into your hart. More desire hath he to shew vs fauours, and to commu-
 nicate

Of our estimation of spir. thinges. 35

ificate himselfe to vs, then we know how to haue, how to receaue them.

For he stayes expecting, that we may desire them, and that we may hunger and thirst after them : *Ego sitienti dabo* *Apo. 21. 6.*

de fonte aqua vite, gratis : si quis sitit, veniat ad me, & bibat. Let whosoever thirsts come to me and drinke : if any man thirst, I *Ioan. 7. 37.*

will giue him of the fountaine of the water of life ; and it shall cost him nothing . Our Lord is wel pleased that we may haue a great desire of vertue & perfection, to the end that when he giues vs any part of this, we may know how to esteeme and conserue it, as a thing of much price . For that which is not much desired, is not wont to be much valued, when it is obtayned . And so one of the chiefe reasons, why we thriue no faster in vertue, and still remayne so farre off from perfection, is because we hunger not, nor thirst not after it; we desire it after a faynt and weake manner, & indeed our desires thereof, are rather dead then aliue.

S. Bonauenture sayth, that there are some men, who haue good purposes and desires, but yet neuer grow to *Bonauen. processu 4. religio c. 3.*

ouercome, nor payne themselves so farre, as once to put their hand to the worke, according to that of the Apostle: *Velle mihi adiacet, perficere autem bonum non inuenio*. But these, are many tymes no true purposes, nor true desires, but only certayne velleicityes, that would faine in some sort, but yet will not in fine do the thing: *Vult & non vult piger*, sayth he Wiseman: *Desideria occidunt pigrum; noluerunt enim quicquā manus eius operari, tota die concupiscit & desiderat*. The slouthfull man will, and yet will not, because he will not put the hand to worke: He spends his whole life in desires: *In desideriis est omnis otiosus*. The Father Doctour Auila compares these me very well, to them who in their dreams conceaue that they are doing great matters; but when they wake, it is iust the contrary, according to that of the Prophet Isay: *Sicut somniat esuriens, & comedit, cum autem fuerit expergescitur, vacua est anima eius*. It happens, that a man, who is hungry or thirsty, dreames that he eates or drinks; but when he wakes, he findes himselfe to be as hungry and thirsty as before. And so these

Rom. 7. 18

Prov. 13. 4

Prov. 21. 25.

Hier. epist. ad Rustic. Monachū.

M. Auila cap. 6. del Audi filia.

Isa. 29. 8.

Of our estimation of spir. thinges. 37

these men, when they are in prayer, conceive sometymes, that they desire to suffer, and to be vnder-valued and despised; but in going from thence, when some fit occasion offers it selfe, then doe they the quite contrary, of what they dreamt. These were not in fine true desires. Others compare them otherwise, & say, That they are like Souldiers painted in some hāging with sword in hand, triumphing ouer their enemies; but yet they neuer strik blow, according to that of the Prophet *Psal. 38.7*
Verumtamen in imagine pertransit homo.
Iust thus doth the whole life of some men passe away in threatening and not striking.

The Prophet *Isay* compares these men to a woman, who was alwaies in the throwes of labour, without euer being deliuered of the child: *Ve-* *Isa 37.3.*
nerunt filij vsque ad partum, & virtus non *et 4.*
est pariendi. S. Hierome vpon those wor- *Reg. 19.*
des of S. Matthew, *Va autem Pregnā-* *Hieron.*
tibus & Nutrientibus in illis diebus, sayth:
Va illis animabus, quæ non perduxerunt *Mat. 24.*
sua gemmina in virum perfectum. Woe be *19.*
to them, who haue not brought to
light

light those good desires, which they conceaued, but strangled the issue in their wombe; for neuer to put them in practise, is to choake them there within. Woe be to them, who passe their whole liues in conceauing desires, and so death findes them without deedes. And afterward, those desires which they had before, will not only doe them no good; but besides, they shall be punished for not complying with those good inspirations, which our Lord gaue them; & so their owne children shall rise and rebell against them, because it was the parents fault, that the children came not to light.

*2. Reg. 18.
7.*

Absalom was hanged by the fayre and golden lockes of his owne head; and so death will seize on many, who shall be destroyed by their owne good purposes. The Apostle and Euangelist

*Apos. 12.
2.*

S. Iohn in his Apocalypse sayth, That he saw a woman in labour, and hard by her a huge Dragon, who was ready to swallow vp, & destroy the creature, as it should come forth. This is that which the Diuell procures by all meanes to doe, when the soule conceales

Of our estimation of spir. thinges. 39

ceaues any good purpose ; and so it will be very needfull, that we, on the other side, procure with the vttermost of our endeauour, that our desires may be such, and so efficacious, as that we may bring them to effect . This as S. Bernard sayth, was that which the Prophet *Isay* intended to expresse by those short, and most sententious wordes : *Si quaritis, quarite* . If you seeke, seeke on . His meaning is, that you must not giue ouer, but that your desires and purposes must be efficacious, and true, and perseuerant, and such as may fill vs with a most sollicitous kind of care, how to please God daily more and more . According to that of the Prophet *Micheas* : *Indicabo tibi, o homo, quid sit bonum, & quid Dominus requirat a te; vtique facere iudicium, & diligere misericordiam, & sollicitum ambulare cum Deo tuo* . These seruorous desires be they, which our Lord requires, to the end, that he may haue occasion to doe vs fauours, and fullfill vs with benedictions . Blessed are they who haue this hunger and thirst after vertue and perfection, for they shall be satisfied . God will

*Bern. ser .
2. de alit.
& latin .
cordis .*

*Isa. 21.
12.*

Mich. 6.8.

*Math. 5.
6.*

S. Ger-
trude.

49 The 1. Treatise. Chap. III.
accomplish their desires. We read of S.
Gertrude, that God told her thus; To
euery one of my saythfull children,
haue I giuen a conduit, or cane of gold
whereby he may draw in, and drinke
vp, out of my deified hart, as much as
himselſe will. Which Cane, he decla-
red to be, the good will and desire of
euery one.

That the more a man giues himſelſe to ſpiri-
tall thinges, the more appetite and
deſire he ſhall haue thereof.

CHAP. IIII.

Eccle. 24.
29.

Greg. hom
36. ſuper
Euangel.

QUI edunt me, adhuc eſurient; &
qui bibunt me, adhuc ſitient, ſayth
the Holy Ghoſt, ſpeaking in the per-
ſon of the diuine Wiſedome: They who
eate me ſhall remaine with hunger; & they
who drinke me, ſhall remaine with thirſt.
S. Gregory ſayth, That this is the dif-
ference betweene corporall bleſſinges
or delightes, and theſe others of the
mind; that the former rayſe a great de-
ſire and appetite of themſelues, when
we poſſeſſe them not, but when we
haue

Of our estimation of spir. things. 41
haue once obtayned them, we esteeme
them at nothing. There without, in
the world, a man desires a place in a
College, or els a Lecture, but then in-
stantly as soone as he hath it, he thinks
no more of that, but growes into an
appetite of somewhat els; as namely
some Chanonry, or some Iudges place
which yet as soone as he hath gotten,
he is also weary of that, and beginnes
to clyme higher with his hart; as for
example to some Bishopricke, or els
to a place in the Councell Royall.
But yet neither can this giue him full
satisfaction, but stil he goes on further,
and yet further on, for whatsoeuer he
hath obtayned, falles short of giuing
him contentment. But now in spiri-
tuall thinges, it is quite contrary; for
whilest we possesse them not, we e-
steeme them not, and are content to
want them: but when once we come
to enioy them, it is then that we come
to esteeme them, as also to desire them
more and more, and still so much the
more, as we haue the more experien-
ce thereof. And the Saint giues this
reason of the difference: Because whe

we haue obtained, & do once possesse corporall benefits and delights, we the vnderstand better the poorenesse and imperfections thereof; and perceauing that they do not satisfy and fullfill the hart, nor giue that cōtentment, which we conceaued, we esteeme that little, which we haue acquired, and we remaine with a desire and thirst, after some great matter, in hope that we shall find that there, which we missed before, but still we are deceaued; for the same will happen to vs still; whence once we shall haue obtayned that next desire, and the next, and yet the next after that other. No obiect of this world, is able to satisfy this mind of

Ioan. 4. 13 man: *Omnis qui bibit ex hac aqua, sitiet iterum.* How much soeuer you may drinke of the waters of this world, you will be sure to thirst againe. The water of contentments & delights of this world, cānot quench or kill our thirst. But spirituall grāces and delights, are then beloued and desired most, when they are possessed and enioyed; for then is their worth, & value knowne; & how much the more perfectly they are

Of our estimation of spir. thinges. 43
are possessed, so much the more and
more hunger and thirst shall we haue
thereof. When a man hath had no ex-
perience of spirituall thinges, nor hath
so much as begunne to tast thereof, it is
not strange, sayth S. Gregory, if he de-
fire them not: *Quis enim amare valeat,
quod ignorat.* For who can loue, or desire
that, whereof he hath no knowledge. For
this reason sayth the Apostle S. Peter: 1. Pet. 2.
Si tamen gustatis, quoniam dulcis est Domi- 3.
us. And the Prophet: *Gustate & vide-* Psalm. 33
te, quoniam suauis est Dominus. Taste and 9.
see, how sweet our Lord is. For it once
you come to taste of God, & the thin-
ges of God, you will find so great gust
and sweetnes in them as to know that
you can neuer eate inough. This is
therefore that, which the Wiseman de-
liuers vs in these wordes: He, who
shall eate or drinke of me, the more he
eates, the more hungry; and the more
he drinkes, the more thirsty he shall be
to drinke me vp. The more you giue
your selues to taste of God, and spiritu-
all thinges, the more hunger & thirst
you will haue thereof.

But heer some man will say: How
can

44 The I. Treatise. Chap. III.

can this agree with that, which was affirmed by Christ our Lord to the Samaritan woman in the Ghospell: *Qui*

Ioan. 4. 13 *autem biberit ex hac aqua, quam ego dabo ei, non sitiet in aeternum?* Heere Christ our Lord sayes, that he who drinks of that water, which he will giue him, shall neuer thirst; & in this other place the holy Ghost declares by the mouth of the Wiseman; that the more we drinke, the more thirst we shall haue.

How doe these places agree? To this the Saints answer, that that which Christ our Lord sayd to the Samaritan woman, is to be vnderstood after this manner. That he, who drinks of the liuing waters, which he promises there, shall thirst no more after sensual and worldly delightes, because the sweetnesse of God, and of spirituall thinges, will take away all gult, and

Gregor :

sauour from those others. S. Gregory sayth: *Sicut post gustum mellis, omnia videntur insipida, ita gustato spiritu, desipit omnis caro.* As when a man hath eaten hony, other thinges will seeme vnpleasant to his tast: so when a man hath once tasted of God, and of spirituall

Of our estimation of spir. things. 45

all things, all the objects of this world will seeme vnsauoury & bitter; & will rather giue offence then gust. But that which the wiseman sayth in this other place: *They who eate of me, shal haue more hunger, & they who drinke of me shall haue more thirst*, is to be vnderstood of the same spirituall things. For the more a man tastes of God, & spirituall things, the more shall he hunger & thirst after them; because then he will the more vnderstand their worth, and the more experience will he be able to take of their sweetnesse & gust, & consequent ly will desire them so much the more. And thus do the Saints expound these places, and make them both agree.

But yet, how will this be able to stand with that, which Christ our Lord sayd by S. Matthew? *Beati qui esuriunt & sitiunt iustitiam, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur*. For heere he sayth, *That they who hunger and thirst after iustice, shalbe satisfied*. And that other place of the Wiseman sayth: *That they who eate and drinke thereof, shall still remayne with hunger and thirst*. These two thinges, both to haue hunger and thirst, & yet withall

Mat. 5, 6.

withall to be filled and satisfied, how can they be compatible with one another? To this there is a full answer: Such is the excellency, and such the eminency of spirituall chinges, that euen with very filling, they breed hunger, and euen with the very satisfying of the hart, they beget a thirst. It is a fullnesse with hunger, and a hunger which growes from being fully fed. This is the wonder, the dignity, and the greatnes of these blessings, which satisfy and fill the hart: but yet all this in such sort, as that still we remayne with hunger and thirst thereof, & the more we go eating & drinking of the, the more doth our hunger and thirst increase. But now withall, this is a hunger, which giues no payne but delight; and this is a thirst which afflicts not, but it recreates and giues satisfaction, and is full of ioy to the hart. It is true, that the perfect and complete fullnes, is not to be felt but in heauen, according to that of the Prophet: *Satiaber cum apparuerit gloria tua. And: Inobriabuntur vbertate domus tua. Then, O Lord, shall I be completely full, and then shall*

Psal. 16.

19.

Psal. 33.9

Of our estimation of spir. things. 47
 shall I be intirely satisfied. and euen inebri-
 ated, when I shall see thee in thy glory, face
 to face. But yet euen there in glory. Bern. ser.
 S. Bernard sayth vpon these wordes, 64. ex
 we shall in such sort be tullfilled with parois.
 that cleare vision of God, that we shal
 euer remaine as it were with hunger
 and thirst, because that blessed sight of
 God cannot possibly giue any thing
 with a glut; but we shall eternally re-
 maine with a sprowting, & fresh de-
 sire, to behold and enioy God, as if til
 it were the first day, & the first houre
 thereof: as S. Iohn sayth in the Apoca-
 lypse, that he saw the Blessed, who
 stood before the Throne of the Lambe
 making a full quire of Musicke, which
 sung with mighty ioy, & it were still
 a new song: *Et cantabant quasi Canticū* Apoc. 14.
nouum. For that song, will for euer be 3.
 new to vs; and that diuine food will
 eternally be giuing vs such a new gust
 that still we shal be as in a new amaze-
 ment, and say: *Manhu? Quid est hoc?* Exod. 16.
What is this? Now after this manner, 15.
 are spiritual things euen in this world,
 because they are but a participation of
 those in heauen, which on the one side

48 The 1. Treatise. Chap. IIII.

fill and satisfy the hart, and on the other, cause a new hunger and thirst of themselves; and the more we apply our soules to them, and the more we taste them, and enioy them, the more hunger and thirst we shall haue after them. But euen this very hunger is a kind of fulnelle, and this very thirst is a mighty recreation, and satisfaction to the soule of man. And all this must help vs on, to haue a great estimation, and to set a very high price vpon spirituall things; and to create in vs such an inflamed affection, and desire thereof, as that forgetting and despising all the objects of this world, we may say with the Apostle S. Peter: *Domine, bonum est nos hic esse*. It will be good for vs, O Lord to be euer heere.

That it is a great signe of a mans being in the state of grace, if he go on with desire to encrease, and improoue himselfe, in the way of spirit.

CHAP. V.

THAT we may animate our selues the more, to carry a great desire to
our

Of our estimation of spir. things. 49

our owne spirituall good, and to haue a kind of hunger and thirst, to proceed in vertue, and to please our Lord dayly more and more, & that we may apply greater care, and diligence thereunto, there is a point, which will help vs much, for it is a very principall consideration and of much comfort; Namely that it is one of the most certaine signes in the world, that God is seated in that soule, & that such a man is well with God. So sayth S. Bernard: *Nullum* Bernard.

omnino praesentiae eius certius testimonium ser. 2. de S.
est, quam desiderium gratiae amplioris. Andr.

There is not a greater signe, nor a more secure testimony of the presence of God in any soule, then to haue a great desire of more vertue, and more grace & perfection. And the Saint prooves it, because God himselfe thus declares this truth, by the mouth of the Wise-man :

Qui edunt me adhuc esurient, & qui bibunt Eccli. 24.
me, adhuc sitient. He, who eates me, shall 29,

haue more hunger and he who drinckes me shall haue more thirst. If you haue hunger and thirst after God, and spirituall things, reioyce thereat; for this is a very great testimony, and signe, that God

D

inhabits

inhabitts your soule. It is he, who giues you this hunger, and who causes this thirst, you haue met with the right veyne of heauenly treasure, since you follow it so well. And as the Hound, goes lasily vp and downe, till he haue fallen vpon the sent; but as soone as he hath met with it, he bestirres himselfe nimble, hunting heere and there, for the prosecuting thereof, and he will not giue ouer till he haue found it; so also he who once hath fallen vpon the right sent of that diuine sweetnesse, runnes after the odour of that precious vnguent. *Trabe me post te, curremus in odorem vnguentorum tuorum.* God who is within you, conducts and carryes you after himselfe. But on the other side, if you feele not this hunger and thirst within your selues, be afrayd, least perhaps it be, because God inhabits not your harts. For this, as *S. Gregory* sayth, haue those things, which are spirituall and are of God, that when we possesse them not, it is then, that we loue not, and desire them not; and that we make no account, at all thereof.

Cant. 1. 5.

Greg. ho.

26. super

Euangelia.

The glorious *S. Bernard* saith, that
he

Of our estimation of spir. things. 51

he trembled, and euen his hayre stood
an end, when he considered that which the Holy Ghost sayd, by the mouth of the Wiseman: *Nescit homo, vtrum amore an odio dignus sit.* A man knowes not, whether he be worthy of loue or hate. Terribilis, sayth he, est locus iste, & totius expers quietis; totus inhorruui, si quando in eum raptus sum; illam apud me replicans cum tremore sententiam; Quis scit, si est dignus amore an odio? But now if this consideration of not knowing, whether or no we be in the fauour, or disfauour of God, made the Saints tremble, who were euen as the very pillars of the Church of God; what may it do to vs, who haue more reason to feare, vpon innumerable causes, which we haue giuen? *In nobismetipsis, responsum mortis habuimus.* I am too sure, that I haue offended God, and I am not sure that I am forgiven; and who is he, that will not tremble at this? O how highly would a man esteeme some good pawne, or security for a thing, which imports him so much! O that I were sure, that God had pardoned me all my finnes! O that I could know, that I were in the grace

Bernard.
ser. 23. super Cant.

Eccles. 9. 1.

2. Cor. 1. 9.

of God! Well then, although it be very true, that in this life we can haue no infallible certainty, that we are in state of grace, and in the friendship of God; without his particuler reuelation; yet may we haue some coniectures, which will create a morall probability thereof in vs; and one of these, yea and one of the greatest is, if a man walke on with this hunger, and great desire of his owne spirituall good, and of dayly encreasing more and more, in the perfection of vertue. And therefore this consideration alone, might suffice to make vs euer carry this desire, if it were but for the hauing of this so good a pawne, and so great a testimony of being in the fauour and friendship of God; which is one of the greatest contentments, and comforts, or rather the very greatest of all, which we can possibly enjoy in this life.

This point is well confirmed, by that which the Holy Ghost sayth in the Prouerbes: *Iustorum semita quasi lux splendens procedit, & crescit usque ad perfectam diem.* The path, sayth he, and way of iust men, and their manner of proceeding,

Of our estimation of spir. thinges. 53

Is like the light of the Sunne, which appears in the morning, and the further it goes, the more it goes encreasing & perfecting it selfe, till it come to the point of noone-day; And so iust men, the longer they liue, the more they go encreasing in vertue.

Numquam iustus arbitratur se comprehensisse, nunquam dicit: satis est; sed semper esurit, sititque iustitiam, ita ut si semper uiueret, semper, quantum in se est, iustior esse contenderet: semper de bono in melius, proficere totis vicibus conaretur, sayth S. Bernard: The Iust man neuer sayth: It is enough. For of them it is written: *Huius de virtute in virtutem.* They euer procure to passe on, and to grow from vertue, till they arriue to the very top of perfection. But now the way of imperfect, lukewarme, and ill men, is like the light of the afternoone, which goes lessening, and as it were, vn saying it selfe, till at length, it be as darke and blacke, as midnight. *Via impiorum tenebrosa; nesciunt ubi corruant.* They grow at length, to so great blindnesse, that they know not when, or where they stumble, nor do they discern their owne imperfections and faultes, nor

Bernard.
epist. 252.
ad Abbat.
Garin.
Psal. 83.
8.

Prov. 4.
19.

54 The I. Treatise. Chap. VI.
haue they any remorse of conscience;
when they fall into them, but some-
times they thinke that to be no sinne,
which yet is sinne, and that to be but
veniall, which perhaps is mortall; so
great is their confusion & blindnesse.

VVhe declared, that the not going
forward, is to go backward.

CHAP. VI.

IT is the common doctrine of the
Saints: *In via Dei non progredi, regredi*
est. In the way of God, not to go forward, is
to go backward. We will heere declare
this truth, & it shall serue vs for a good
meanes, to animate vs to go still on,
towards Perfection. For whose sake
should any man retire backe from his
good beginnings, especially when he
considers, that the sentence of our Bles-
sed Sauiour himselfe, in the holy Gos-
pell, is to go against him: *Nemo mittens*
manum suam ad aratrum, & respiciens re-
tro, aptus est Regno Dei. He who hath
put his hand to the plough, and be-
gunne to tread the way of perfection,
and

Luc. 9.
62.

Not to go forward, is to go backward. 55
 and then lookes backe, is not fit for the
 Kingdom of heauen. These are words,
 which in reason should make vs all
 tremble. The Blessed S. Augustin sayth: *Aug. ep. st.*
Tamdiu non relabimur retrò, quamdiu ad 43. aa De-
priora contendimus; ac vbi coeperimus stare, metriam
descendimus; nostrumq; 3. 4. progredi, re-
uertit est. Si volumus non re- live, currendum
est. VVe do so farre forth not returne backe,
as we earnestly endeaour to go forward; &
if once we beginne to be at a stay, euen then
do we instantly retire. And therefore if we
haue not a mind to go backe, it will be
necessary that we be euer procuring to
pasle further on.

This very thing, & in effect in the
 selfe same wordes, is sayd by S. Gregory,
 S. Chrysostome, and S. Leo the Pope, and *Gregor.*
 many other Saints; and the same do *Chrysost.*
 they repeate many times, but particu- *S. Leo Pa-*
 larly S. Bernard prosecutes it more at *pa.*
 large, in two of his Epistles. Therein he *Bernard.*
 goes discoursing of some lazy & luke- *epist. 253.*
 warme Religious man, who contents *et 341.*
 himselfe with leading an ordinary kind
 of life, and attends not to profit in the
 way of Spirit, and he argues the case
 with him after this manner: O Monache,

56 The 1. Treatise . Chap. VI.

non vis proficere? Will thou not attend to proceed and profit? *No. Vis ergo deficere?* Thou wilt therefore be sure to returne backe? Not so neyther, will he say. *No?* what then? I will remayne, saith he, as I am: I endeauour not to be better, and I resolute not to be worse. *Hoc ergo vis, quod esse, non potest.* This is to desire to be that, which cannot be. *Quid enim stat in hoc seculo?* For there is no one thing in this whole world, which can possibly remayne in one & the selfe same state. Of God alone, it may be truly sayd: *Apud quem non est*

Apo. 1. 17. transmutatio nec vicissitudinis obumbratio.

Malach. 3. 6. Ego dominus, & non mutor. But al worldly things are in a continuall vicissitude

Pf. 101. 27. of change. Omnes sicut vestimentum veterascent, & sicut opertorium mutabis eos, & mutabuntur, tu autem idem ipse es, & annitui non deficient. And particularly man, as

Iob. 14. 2. Iob sayth, neuer remaynes in one being, or state. Fugit velut umbra; & nunquam in eodem statu permanet. Yea and Christ our Lord himselte, as Saint Bernard sayth: *Quamdiu in terris visus est, & cum hominibus conuersatus est, nunquam stetit; did euen he peraduenture remaine still the same? No, sayth the Euangelist S. Luke:*

Luc. 2. 52.

Et

Not to go forward, is to go backward. 47
Et Iesus proficiebat sapientia & etate & gra-
tia apud Deum, & apud homines. As he
 went encreasing in age, so went he al-
 so encreasing in wisdom and in grace
 both with God and man; that is to say,
 giuing by effects, greater proofes of his
 sanctity, and wisdom. And the Pro-
 phet sayth, that he prepared himselfe
 to runne in this way: *Exultauit vt Gigas*
ad currendam viam. If therefore we haue Psal. 18.
 a mind to continue with Christ our 6.
 Lord, we must keep the pace he held.
Qui dicit se in ipso manere, debet sicut ipse 1. Ioan. 2.
ambulauit, & ipse ambulare, saith S. Iohn. 6.
Si ergo, illo currente, tu gradum sistis, non
Christa appropias, sed magis elongas. If,
 when Christ our Lord is running, you
 runne not after him, but will needes
 stand still; it is euident, that you must
 part, and be farre a sunder. *Vidit scalam* 6. Genes.
Iacob, & in scala Angelos; vbi nullus residens, 28. 12.
nullus subsistens, apparuit; sed vel ascendere
vniversi. Iacob saw a ladder, which rea-
 ched from earth to heauen; and he saw
 Angels vpon it; but there was not one
 of them all, who sat downe, or stayed,
 but either they ascended or descended.
 Only God sate still at the top of the
 ladder;

ladder; to giue vs to vnderstand, as S. Bernard sayth, that in this life, there is no middle course in the way of vertue, betweene rising vp, & falling downe; betweene going forward, and backward; yea and by the selfe same reason, that a man goes not forward, he is here conuincd to go backward; as a loose, and hanging wheele is wont to do, which returnes if it be stopt. The same sayth the Abbot Theodorus, as Cassianus

Cassian. collat. 6. Abb. Theodori. cap. 14. recounts: *Debemus inquit, ad virtutum studia, irremissa ac sollicitudine nosmetipsos semper extendere, ipsisque nos iugiter exercitijs occupare, ne cessante profectu confestim diminutio subsequatur; vt enim diximus, in vno, mens, eodemque statu manere non praualeat. Id est, vt nec augmentum virtutum capiat, nec detrimentum sustineat; non adquisisse enim, minuisse est quia desinens proficiendi appetitus, non aberit à periculo recidendi.*

But some will say: It is well, and it shall be true, since the Saints will needs haue it so; but yet neuerthelesse, it seemes to be a kind of speaking in Parables and figures: *Ediffere nobis parabolam hanc*; we would be glad that you should

Not to go forward, is to go backward. 59
 should declare this truth to vs a little
 more distinctly, and cleerly. Content.
 The Saints open it more particularly.
Cassianus teaches it by a very good com-
 parison, which is also brought by *Saint*
Gregory; and it is this: As he, who should
 stand in the midst of the channell of
 some impetuous riuer, if he would con-
 tent himselfe with standing still, and
 not labour to get vp higher, he would
 be in dāger of being carryed down the
 streame; so is it, say they, in the way of
 a spirituall life. For this way, is so a-
 gainst the streame, and so hard to be
 prosecuted by our nature, which is
 mightily peruered by sinne; that he,
 who takes not paynes, and labours not
 hard to go forwards, will be carryed
 downe the streame, by the current of
 his passions; iust as he, who goes against
 the tyde, if he giue ouer to ply it, and
 row hard, that so he may get forward,
 will find himselfe quickly much cast
 backe. *Regnum calorum vim patitur, &*
violenti rapiunt illud. The Kingdome of
 Heauen suffers force, and they must be
 earnest, and able men, who will runne
 away with it, & it will be needfull to
 be

Cassianus
ubi supra.
Greg. 3. p.
Pastoralis
admonitio.
 35.

60 *The I. Treatise. Chap. VI.*
be alwayes rowing and rugging hard
against the current streame of our pas-
sions, or else we shall quickly find our
selues to haue lost much ground.

*Hierom.
Chrysost.*

S. Hierome and *S. Chrysostome* de-
clare this further, by another conside-
ration, which is also generally recea-
ued by all Diuines and Saints: and *S.*

S. Thom.
2. 2. q.
184. ar. 5.
ad 2.

Thomas treating of the state of Religi-
on, makes vse thereof. *S. Thomas* sayth,
that all Religious men are in a state of
perfection; not that instantly men are
therefore perfect, because they are Re-
ligious; but because they are obliged to
aspire, and thirst after perfection; and
he who procures not, and labours not
to be perfect, is, sayth he, but a coun-
terfet Religious man, because he en-
deauours not to do that, for which he
came to Religion. I will not heere de-
bate, whether or no that Religious
man should sin mortally, who would
say thus: For my part I content my
selfe with keeping the commaunde-
ments of God, and my essential vowes,
but as for the other Rules, which oblige
not a man to sinne I will not obserue
them; for of this the Doctours speake
diffe-

Not to go forward, is to go backward. 61
differently. Some say, that such a one
would sinne mortally; others say, that
if no kind of contempt be added to it, it
will not be a mortall sinne. But that
which is certaine, and that where in all
men agree, is, that the Religious man; *Eccl. 19. 1.*
who carries such an intention and pur-
pose, is an ill, and scandalous Religi-
ous man; and that morally speaking, he
is in great danger of falling into mortall
finnes; because he, who apprehends
not danger in smaller things, will fall
by little and little into greater. And for
as much as concernes our purpose, this
may suffice, since it is misery enough
in the way of spirit, to go backward.

To the end that we may vnder-
stand this the better, *Saint Chrysostome* *Chrysost.*
brings certayne familiar examples. Yf *ser. de vir-*
you had, sayth he, some slaue, who *tut. & vi-*
were no thiefe, nor gamester, nor dru- *tigs.*
kard, but rather faythfull and tempe-
rate, and without any vice at all; but
yet should resolue to be idle all day at
home, and not do those things, which
belong to his office; who doubts, but
that such a one would be seuerely pu-
nished, though he should commit no o-
ther

ther fault at all ; for it would be fault enough , for him not to do that which he ought. And if a labouring man, who were otherwise very honest and iust , should carry his hands all day in his pocketts , and would neyther plough , nor sow , nor dresse the vines , it is plaine that he would be very worthy of re- prooffe , though he should do no other hurt at all ; for the not doing of that which belongs to his place , is iustly esteemed to be hurt enough. Yea , and if you had a hand , which did not hurt at al , but only were idle & vnprofitable , & would do no seruice to the other parts of the body ; would you not hold it to be faulty enough ? Now iust thus it is , in spirituall thinges. That Religious man , who is idle heere , and carryes his armes folded vp , without walking on , or treating how to obtayne more perfection , or stepping on into more vertue , is worthy of great reprehension , because he does not that , which belongs to his duty or state. The very not doing good , is to do hurt ; and so the very not going forward , is to go backward ; since he is wanting to his profession

Not to go forward, is to go backward. 63
fession and obligation. And what greater fault can there be in land or earth, then to be barren, and to yield no fruit, especially if it be well cultivated and tilled? So that such earth as this of your soules is, which hath beene attended with so much care, and watered so oftē, with the showers of celestial grace, and warmed with such store of beames proceeding from the Sunne of Iustice; that if yet notwithstanding all this, it would bring no croppe at all, but should become as a meere withered bough without producing any fruit, *Qeriazo seco.* what greater fault could there be, then such a barrenesse as this? *Retribuēbant mihi mala pro bonis, sterilitatem anima mea.* This indeed were to render ill for good, *Psal. 34.* to him, to whome we owe so much, & 12. of whome we haue receaued so great fauours.

They are also wont to bring another comparison, wherby this truth is well declared. As, when men be at sea, a Calme is a kind of grieuous tempest for the passengers, because the while, they wast their prouision, which they had made for their voyage, so that afterward,

ward, they find themselves in the midst of a sea, without meanes to live; and so also doth it happen to them, who, when they saile through the tempestuous sea of this world, are at a calme in their vertue, not procuring to proceed therein; for they consume and waste what they had acquired before, and so grow to an end of all goodnesse; and afterward find themselves without provision, in the midst of the many waues, and tempests of the temptations, which rise vp against them, and of those occasions, which present themselves, for the encountering wherof, they had need to haue kept themselves in plenty, and to haue made a large stocke of vertue. Wo be to him, who is in a calme, for as much as concerns his course of vertue.

Ad Galat.
5. 7. *Currebatis bene: quis vos impeditur veritati non obedire?* At the first, when you entered into Religion, you began to runne well; but now you are at a stand,

1. Ad Cor.
4. 8. *saturati estis, iam diuites facti estis;* you take vpon you now, as if already you were growne ancient and might now well be weary; already you thinke
your

To oversee what is wanting. 65
 your selfe rich, & that you have stocke
 enough wherewith to trade. But looke
 better about you, for you have still
 much way to make: *Grandis tibi restat*
via; and many occasions may be offer- 3. Reg. 19.
 red, wherein you will have need of 7.
 more humiliry, of more patience, and
 of more mortification, and indifferen-
 cy; and you may chaunce find your
 selfe vnprovided, and farre from home,
 in the times of your greatest necessity.

That it helpes much for the obtaining of per-
 fection, that a man forget the good
 which formerly he did, and place
 his eyes upon that which now
 is wanting to him.

C. H. A. R. V. I.

Q V I iustus est, iustificetur adhuc; &
 sanctus sanctificetur adhuc. Let him
 who is iust, procure to be yet more iust; and
 him, who is holy, to be more holy. St. Hierome
 and Bede vpon those wordes: *Beati qui*
esuriunt & sitiunt iustitiam; quoniam ipsi
saturabuntur. Blessed are they who hunger
 and thirst after iustitie, for they shall be sa-
 tisfied;

Apoc. 22.
 11.

Hieron.
 Beda.
 Math. 5.
 6.

nished, say, *apertissime* not instruit, num-
 quam nos satis iustos estimare debere, sed
 quotidianum iustitia semper amare profe-
 ctam. Christ our Lord did clearly
 teach vs by these words, that we must
 neuer conceaue our selues to haue ver-
 tue inough, but must dayly procure to
 haue more. This is that, which the
 glorious Euangelist S. Iohn expresse
 in the wordes alleadged.

Phil. 3. 13 The Apostle S. Paul, writing to the
 Philippians, doth furnish vs with a
 meanes, which is very fit for this pur-
 pose, whereof, he sayth, that he had
 serued himselte: *Frater, ego me non ar-
 bitror comprehendisse, vnum autem, qua
 quidem retrò sunt obliuiscens; ad ea verò
 qua sunt priora extendens meipsum, ad de-
 stinatum. prosequor, ad vltimum supernae
 vocationis Dei, in Christo Iesu. Brethren,
 I hold not my selfe to be perfect, the
 Apostle sayth, he that holdes himselfe
 not to be perfect, and who then shall
 thinke he is perfect. I, sayth he, doe
 not conceaue that I haue acquired per-
 fection; but I procure to make all hast,
 for the obtrayning thereof. And what
 do you in order to this end? Doe you
 know*

To oversee what is wanting. 76
know what? I forget that which is past,
and I consider what is now wanting to me;
and to this I animate my selfe, and pro-
cure to obtaine it.

All the Saintes do much recom-
mend this meanes to vs, as vsed and
prescribed by the Apostle. S. Hierome
sayth: *Quicumque sanctus, quotidie in pri-
ora extēditur, & prateritorum obliuiscitur.*
He, who desires to be a Saint, forgets
all the good, which he hath done, &
animates himselfe to obtaine whatso-
euer he wantes: *Felix est, qui quotidie
proficit, qui non considerat quid heri fecerat,
sed quid hodie faciat, ut proficiat.* Happy
is he, who goes dayly profiting in ver-
tue; and will you know, who this is
like to be? He, who considers not,
what he did yesterday, but what it
will be fit to do to day, that so he may
still be going on.

S. Gregory, and S. Bernard declare
this in more particuler manner. This
consideration hath two principal parts
belonging to it. The first is, that we
forget the good, which we haue done
hitherto, and that we cast not our eyes
backe vpon it. And it was needfull to

*Basil. epist.
ad Chilon.*

*Hier. sup.
Psal. 83.*

*Greg. lib.
22. mora.
cap. 5.
Bernardus
1. de alt.
& latit.
cordis.*

aduertise vs particularly heereof, because it is a very naturall thing for vs, to looke willingly vpon that which may delight vs most, and to looke off from that which may trouble vs. And because the view of our spirituall profit, and of the good we conceaue our selues to haue done, delightes vs, and the obseruing how great our spiritual wantes are, and how much we lacke of what we ought to haue, is wont to make vs sad, therefore doe our eyes go more willingly towards the good, which we haue done, then towards our wantes in that kind. S. Gregory sayth, that as the sicke man goes in search after the most easy and downy, and most delightfull part of the bed, that so he may repose therein: so is it a kind of sickenesse and weakenesse and imperfection of mankind, that we rather take gult & ioy in beholding the good we haue done, then in considering the wantes, to which we are subiect. S. Bernard bids vs take heed of this, because there are many dangers in it: *Si enim respicis ad ea, quae habes, eleuaris in superbiam, dum te alijs proponis, proficere*

To oversee what is wanting. 69

ficere negligis, quia magnum te habere arbitraris, & tepidius incipis deficere, & remissius agere. Because if you put your selfe to view the good you haue done, it will serue to puffed you vp into pride, whilest you conceaue your selfe to be some body, and from thence you will grow to compare your selfe with others, and to preferre your selfe before them, yea to value them little, and your selfe much. If you belieue not me, lend an eye to the Pharisee of the Gospell, & consider, how ill this course proued with him. He brought the good he had done into his owne sight, and he resolues to make this catalogue of his vertues: *I giue thee thanks, O Lord, that I am not like other men who are robbers, adulterers, and vniust persons; nor am I like the Publican heere present: I fast twice in the weeke, I exactly pay my Tythes and first fruits, &c.* But what followes? *Dico vobis, descendit hic iustificatus in domum suam ab illo.* I tell you of a truth, sayth Christ our Lord, that the Publican, to whome he preferred himselfe, departed thence a iust man; and that other, who had held him for iust, departed thence

Luc. 18.

11. & 14

thence condemned as vnjust and wicked. This is that which the Diuell pretends by laying the good you haue done, before your eyes; namely to make you proud of your selfe, and to despise and vnder-value others, that so you may become wicked & proud. And besides, there is another danger (as *S. Bernard* sayth) in looking vpon the good you haue done, and in ruminating vpon the paynes you haue taken; & that is, to make you the more negligent in going forward, and the more loose, and luke-warme in attending to your spirituall profit; when you shall thinke, that you haue taken paynes inough in your Order, & that now, forsooth, you may attend to take your ease. And as travellers, when they begin to be weary of the length of the way, turne about to see how farre they haue gone; so we, when we grow weary, and when tepidity is stealing in vpon vs, put our selues to looke vpon all that, which we had done before, & this makes vs take the more contentment therein, and perswade vs to sit down in our lazinesse, with

with the lesse remorie.

Now then, that we may flye from these inconueniences and dangers, it will be very needfull for vs, not to gaze vpon the good we haue done, but to consider our spirituall wantes; for the former of these sights will inuite vs to ease, and the second will excite vs to labour. And this is the second part of that meanes, which the Apostle presentes; namely, that we fixe our eyes vpo that which is wanting to vs, that so we may animate & encourage our selues to the obtrayning thereof. This the Saints declare, by certayne manuell comparisons, and examples.

S. Gregory sayth, that as a man, who owes a thousand Crownes to another, is not cōtented or satisfied with himselfe, for hauing payd two hundred, or foure hundred, but is euer considering how much is wanting of the rest some; and this is that which giues him payne, and till the whole debt be discharged, he will neuer find himselfe free from care; so must we not looke vpon that good, which we may haue done hitherto, whereby we may haue

Greg. l. 22
moral. cap
5.

payd a parte of that debt, which we owe to God: but vpon the much, which is still vnpayd by vs, and this is that, which must giue vs care and paine; as the thorne, which we alwayes carry in our hartes, whereby they must be pierced from side to side. S. Gregory also sayth, that as diligente travellers and Pilgrimes reflect not vpon how farre they are come, but vpon how farre they are to go, and that they alwayes carry this before their eyes, till they fully arrine at their iourneys end: so we, who are true travellers and pilgrimes, walking daily towards our Country, which is Heaven, must not busie our selues in thinking, how farre we may conceaue that we are to come, but how farre we are sure that we want yet to goe. *More in-
aque viatorum, nequaquam debemus aspi-
cere quantum iam iter egimus, sed quantum
superest, ut peragamus.* Behold, sayth S. Gregory, it will be of little vse to such as trauell & pretend to arrine at a certaine place, how farre soeuer they are come, if yet they dispatch not that, which remaines. And consider also,
that

To oversee what is wanting. 73

that the prize of the course or race, which is ordained for him, who shall runne best, must not be carried away by them, who dispatched a part of the way, though with neuer so great speed if withall they chanced to giue ouer towards the end; and so also, will it not auaille you, that you haue begunne to runne well, if withall you giue ouer before the end of the course: *Sic*

1. Cor. 9.

currite, vt comprehendatis, sayth the Apostle. Procure so to runne, as that you may obtaine, and arriue to that, to which you preted. Neuer thinke how farre you haue runne hitherto, but fixe youre eyes vpo that, to which you are going, which is Perfection; and consider, how much is yet wanting to you, and so you will be sure to runne well. *S. Chrysostome* sayes, that when a man considers, that he is not yet at the end of his course, he will neuer giue ouer running, till he arriue there.

24.

Chrysost.

hom. 24.

super Epist

ad Rom.

tom. 4.

S. Bernard tells vs, that we must be as so many negotiatours, and merchants of this world. You shall see a Merchant, a man of businelle, who liues with so much care and diligence,

Bern. ser.

2. de alia.

et latin.

cordis.

to the end that he may gaine, & make daily increase of his stocke, that he thinkes not at all, of what he had gotten or acquired before, nor of the labour it cost him: but all his drift, and care is bent vpon making new bargaines, and in daily heaping vp more, & more; as if till then, he had lost all his tyme, and done nothing. After this manner, sayth he, must we carry our selues. All our thoughts must beate, vpon how we may daily increase our stocke, how we may daily get ground of our selues towards the purchase of humility, of charity, of mortification, and of all the other vertues; and like good spirituall Merchants, we must not thinke, either of what we haue gotten, or how much we haue laboured hitherto. And so Christ our Lord sayd, that the Kingdome of heauen is like a Merchant, or man of trade, and he comandes vs to employ our stocke:

Math. 13. Negotiamini dum venio.

45.

Luc. 19.

13.

And, that we may prosecute this comparison of the Merchant, since the holy Ghospell speakes thereof; do but see how worldly Merchants, & men
of

To oversee what is wanting. 79

of trade, goe with so incessant sollicitude and care, that they may not loose a haire-breadth, nor suffer any little occasion to sleep, wherein they may increase their stocke; and do you also like them. Loose no ground nor occasion, wherein you may increase your stocke of spirit. Let vs all encourage our selues not to forbear the making of any one step towards that perfection, which by Gods grace we might obtaine, as our B. Father recommends to our care. You must not let passe any occasiō without reaping some spirituall profit therby; as namely by that little angry word, which the other spake to you; or by that other thing, which you were enioyned to doe by Obedience against your inclination, or by the occasion, which was offered whereby to humble your selfe. All these are so many gaines for you, & in reason, you were to go in pursuite & purchase of these occasions; and when most of these should offer themselves, you were to goe the better content & the more glad to bed; iust as the Merchant doth, the day when he hath met
with

Sexta part

Const c. 10

9. 1. & reg

15. sum.

with most occasions of growing rich; because that day hath proued best with him according to his state; and so this other day proued well with you in your state of being a Religious man, if you haue knowne to serue your selfe thereof. And as the Merchant considers not, whether the other loose or no; nor is he angry with him, if he do; but only tak knowledge of his owne gayne, and is glad therof; so must not you reflect whether the other did well or ill in giuing you that occasion, or whether he had reason therein or no; nor must you be agry with him for it, but contēt your selfe with being glad of your owne gayne. O how free should we be from temptation, and how farre from loosing our peace, if we would walke after this manner, when such occasions present themselves? If that which might afflict and trouble vs, were once the same very thing, which we desire and seeke, what could euer trouble or afflict vs?

Moreouer, as the Merchant goes absorpt & euē possessed in such sort with his businesse, that he thinks of nothing els;

els; & in all the accidents & occurēces which are offered, his eyes, & his hart are instantly at watch to see, if he can picke out any gayne from thence, he is eating, & yet he is thinking of that, and with this thought, and with this care, he goes to bed, & it wakens him euen at midnight, and it rowses him vp in the morning; and so he walkes on with it all the day: Iust so are we to carry our selues in the businesse of our soules, and in all the occasions, which shall occurre; both our eyes & hart must be sent about to spye, how we may be able to fetch some spirituall profit from thence. When we are eating, we must thinke of this, and with this caution & care, we must goe to bed, and ryse, & go on with it not only all the day, but all our life, because this in fine, is our businesse, and this is to be our treasure, and there is none but this worth the seeking. S. Bonauenture addes to this, that as a merchant findes not perhaps, all that he desires, and needes in any one faire or port, but in many; so the Religious man must not only seeke for profit & perfect-

Bonan. 20.
2. opusc. l.
2. de profc.
religio. c. 2.

perfection, in prayer, and spirituall consolation, but in temptations also, and in taking paines, and in performing his other employments, and finally, in all those occasions, which may present themselves.

O that we would seeke, and procure to obtaine vertue after this manner: How soone should we grow rich?

Prov. 2. 4. Si quaesieris eam quasi pecuniam, & sicut thesaurum effoderis illam, tunc intelliges timorem Domini, & scientiam Dei inuenies.

If you seeke, (sayth the VVise man) for vertue and perfection, (which is true wisdom) with that diligence and care, wherewith worldly men seeke for money, and as they digge into mines to meet with treasure, you shall not fayle to find it. And herein, saith S. Bernard,

Bernard.
ubi supra.

Our Lord askes not much at our hands; since for the purchase of true wisdom, and true treasure, (which is God himselfe) he exactes no more care and diligence of vs; then that which worldly men bring to the search of transitory riches, which are subiect to rust, & theewes; and whereof to morrow, or the next day, will see the end; whereas in all reason, our appetite and desire of spirituall goods, cr

To ouersee what is wanting. 79

Our diligence in the obtaining thereof, should be exacted to be so much more, as these goods are greater, and more precious then they.

And therefore this Saint, doth profoundly bewayle this misery, & saith:

Magna confusio, magna valde, quod ardentius illi perniciose desiderant, quam nos vitia. Citius illi ad mortem properant, quam nos ad vitam. It is matter of extreame confusion and shame for vs, that we see worldly men, pursue tēporall things, yea and euen vices, and sinnes, with more diligence and care, then we seeke vertue. And they runne with more anxiety, and at fuller speed, towards death, then we do towards life.

Bern. de
alut. et
basitud.
cord. serm.
1. et epist.
341.
Hisor. Ec-
cles. p. 2.
l. 6. c. 1.
Ibid. legi-
tur de Ab-
bate Non-
no in vita
S. Pelagii
In vita P.
Franc. Xa-
nier. li. 3.
cap. 16.

It is recounted in the Ecclesiasticall history of the Abbot Pambus, that comming once to the Citty of Alexandria, he met a vayne woman and saw that she was curiously adorned & dressed; which cast him vpon teares and sighes, and he thus cryed out: *Woe is me, O wretched creature that I am.* His disciples asked him, why he wept. To which he made them this answer: Would you haue me do lesse then weep, when I find that this woman takes

taks more care to compose & dresse her selfe for the pleasing of men, then I employ in the pleasing of Almighty God? and that she busies herselfe more, about ensnaring men, that so she may cast them downe to hell, then I do to conduct them to heaven? And we read of the B. Father Francis Xavier that Apostolicall man; that he was confounded and euen couered with shame, to find that the Merchantes had made more hast in carrying their transitory and poore worldly warres to Iapone, then he had done in carrying thither the riches, & the treasure of the Gospell, for the dilating of the Fayth of Christ, & the amplifying of the Kingdome of Heauen. And now let vs also be ashamed, and euen confounded, to see, that the children of this world, are more prudent, and diligent in worldly things, then we are in the thinges of God. *Quia filij huius saculi prudentiores filijs lucis, in generatione sua sunt.* And let this suffice, to make vs forsake our loosenesse, and lukewarmenesse in the seruice of God.

Luk. 16.8.

That

To set our eyes on high things. 81

That it helps much towards the obtaining of perfection, to place our eyes vpon the doing of high, and excellent things.

CHAP. VIII.

IT will also help vs much, towards our spirituall profit, and the obtaining of perfection, to haue our eyes euer placed vpon such things as are high, and of great perfection, according to that counsell, which was given by S. Paul to the Corinthians: *Emulamini autem charissimi, charismata meliora, & adhuc excellentiorem viam vobis demonstrabo.* Prepare and dispose your selues, towards the doing of more eminent things; you must attempt and enterprize things, which are excellent and great. This is a help of much importance. For indeed we are to passe very farre on, with our designes & desires, to the end, that we may be able, to make our actions arrive at least so farre, as reason requires. That which heere we say, and the importance & necessity of this meanes, will be the better vnderstood,

1. ad Cor.
12. 31.

derstood, by a plaine and manuell comparison. When a long-bow is weake, a man must lay his ayme a handfull or two above the marke, to the end he may be able to reach it, because the string is weake, and therefore will not arrive to the white, if it be leuelled no higher; but if you allow a handfull or two of more height, you may perhaps hit the marke. Our selues are this weak bow; for we are so slacke, and so loose, that to the end we may hit the white we must ouer-lay the marke. Man is made so miserable by sinne, that to the end he may arrive to any poore mediocrity of Vertue, it wil be necessary, that his good purposes and desires, should ayme much further.

But some man will say; I pretend to no more, but only to commit no mortall sinne; I aspire to no more perfection, then this. If that be true, I much feare, that you will not be able to arrive so farre, because the bow is weake. If you would leuell higher, perhaps you might reach as far as you pretend; but otherwise I am in extreme feare, that you will fall short; and that you runne much hazard of
commit.

committing mortall sinne. The Religious man, who aspires not only to keep the commaundements of God, but also his Counsell; and not only to abstaine from mortall finnes, but euen from veniall, and from all imperfections; this man is in a very probable way, of being able to abstaine from mortall sinne; because he leuelled much higher. And if, by reason of humane frailty, he were not able to hit, where he thought, but fell short, he will faile but in some particuler, concerning a Counsell, or some little Rule, or some small imperfection, or finally in some veniall sinne; but the other, who only aymed at not sinning mortally, when he happens to fall short, by reason that the bow is weake, is in danger of falling into mortall sinne. And by this meanes, we see worldly men so miserably fall into such finnes; whereas good Religious people are, through the mercy of our Lord, so free, & so tarre off from theese. And this is one of the great benefits, which we enjoy in Religion, and for which we are bound to giue great

thanks to our Lord, who brought vs to it; and though in this state, we found no other benefit then this, it might wel suffice to keep vs in great contentment and comfort; and to make vs esteeme it for a great fauour and benefit of our Lord, who conducted vs hither. For heere, I confide in our Lord, that you will be able to passe your whole liues, without euer falling into mortall sin; and if you had continued in the world, perhaps you would not haue byn able to haue liued a yeare, nor a moneth, nor perhaps a weeke, without being so miserable.

Heereby also, may the danger of that tepide & negligent Religious man be vnderstood, who makes no great difficulty to breake his Rules, & treats not of things, which concerne Perfection; for such a man as this, may well make account, that he is neere committing some grieuous sinne. If therefore you meane to profit, you must ayme at the obtrayning of a most profound humiliry, so farre as to receaue affronts & dishonours with much ioy; and I pray God, that with all this diligence, you
may

To set our eyes on high things. 83
 may be able to endure them with so
 much as patience. Let your ayme be at
 the obtrayning a most perfect obedi-
 ence; not only of the will, but the vn-
 derstanding also; & yet I shall be glad,
 that sometimes you may not fayle in
 complying and executing things of o-
 bedience and the punctuality thereof,
 euen in ordinary things. Procure to be
 resigned, and to make your selues per-
 fectly indifferent for the admitting of
 those high, & great difficulties, which
 may in any possibility occurre; and yet
 I beseech our Lord, that you may be
 able to accept of such as are the most v-
 suall and common, & which are wont
 every day to present themselves.

This, as S. Augustin sayth, was the
 art & inuention of Almighty God him-
 selfe, in placing for the foundation and
 beginning of his Commandements
 the most high and most perfect of them
 all: *Dilige Dominum Deum tuum, ex toto*
cordetuo, & ex tota anima tua, & ex omni-
bus viribus tuis, & ex toto mente tua. Thou
 shalt loue thy Lord thy God, with thy
 whole hart, with thy whole wil, with
 thy whole soule, and with thy whole

Aug. lib. de
perf. iust.
ratiocinat.
15. to. 7.
S. Tho. 1.
2. 9. 184.
art. 3. ad
2.
Lnc. 10.
27.
Math. 22.
37.
Deutr. 6.
1.

1. ad Tu. strength, *Hoc est maximum & primum*
 1. 5. *mandatum.* This is the greatest Com-
 mandement, and this is the ayme and
 end of them all. For, this not employ-
 ing our selues vpon any other thing
 but God, and this continuall busying
 of our whole hart, our whole will, our
 whole vnderstanding, and our whole
 strength vpon the actuall loue of his
 diuine Maiesty, belongs to the state of
 the Blessed; and we cannot in this life,
 arriue so farre as this, because we must
 perforce, lend a little of our care to the
 obligations, which concerne these bo-
 dies of ours. And yet, this commande-
 ment, being so high and of so great per-
 fection, our Lord layes it before vs, &
 appointes it to be the first of them all,
 to the end, that we may vnderstand,
 how farre we are to aspire, and to what
 height we must procure to arriue: *Cur*
non præcipiatur quod Deus ex toto corde dili-
gatur, etiamsi hoc præceptum in hac vita non
possit impleri, quia non recte curritur, si quod
currendum est, nesciatur. For this reason,
 saith *S. Augustin*, God placed before our
 eyes, this so high and so great a Com-
 mandement, at the very first, to the
 end,

To set our eyes on high things. 87

end, that when we were looking at an object of so great eminency and perfection as this, we might stretch out the arme, and throw the barre as farre as possibly we could; for so much the higher, as we ayme, so much the lesse short shall we fall.

Vpon those words of the Prophet, *Psal. 83. Beatus vir, cuius auxilium abs te, ascensiones 6: in corde suo disposuit*, S. Hierome saith: *Hieron. Sanctus ponit ascensiones in corde suo; peccator descensiones.* The iust and holy man is euer looking and aspiring to go forward in perfection; and this is that thought, which is euen wrought and wouen into his hart, according to that of the Wiseman: *Cogitationes iusti semper in abundantia*; But the sinner, and the imperfect man, thinkes not of this; but contentes himselfe with leading a vulgar life, and at the most, aspires but to a middle way, and so he comes to shrink and fall short: And so Gerson sayth: *Ge. f. 3 p. Vox multorum est, sufficit mihi vita carnis: tract. de mist. Theo. nis, si cum imis saluari potero, satis est. No. piact. in- lo merita Apostolorum, nola, nolare per sum- austr. sen ma, incedere per planiora contentus sum, consider. 4.* This is the discourse of many; For my

part, I can content my selfe with leading a common life; I desire no more, but to be saved; let those other excellencies, and perfections, remaine for the Apostles, and those great Saints; I pretend not to fly so high, but to go by the ordinary and beaten way. This, I say, is the language of imperfect men, of which the multitude consists, for the perfect are few: *Multi sunt vocati, pauci vero electi*, saith Christ our Lord in the Ghospell, *Et lata porta, & spatiofa via est, qua ducit ad perditionem, & multi sunt qui intrant per eam: quam angusta porta & arcta via est, qua ducit ad vitam, & pauci sunt, qui inueniunt eam.* The gate & the way, which leades to perfection, and eternall life, is narrow and strayte, and there are few, who find it; but the ordinary way of remissenes is very large and so many are willing to walke through it. These, as *S. Augustine* saith, are they, whom the Prophet calles, *Pecora campi*, beastes of the field, because they wil be ranging in the field, which is a large and spacious place, and they will not come within circle, or Rule. And therefore *Gerson* sayes, that this
only

Math. 20.
16.

Math. 7.
13.

August. in
Ps. 8.
Psal. 8. 3.

To set our eyes on high things. 89

only word, A common life shall serue my
surme; I will content my selfe with being sa-
ued, and pretend to no more perfection than
this; doth sufficiently shew a mans im-
perfection, since he thus disclaimes,
from going in, by the narrow gate.
And such men as these, who by reason
of their tepidity, will needes conceaue,
that it is enough for them to be saued,
amongst the middle sort of men, haue
much cause, (as he sayth) to feare, that
they shal be condēned with the foolish
Virgins, who lost their opportunity,
and fell a sleep; and with that slouthful
seruant, who contented himselfe with
keeping, and burying the talent which
had beene giuen him, vnder ground;
and would not negotiate nor profit by
it; and so the talent was taken from
him, and the seruant was cast into ex-
terious darkenesse; and in the Ghospell
we read of no other cause of his con-
demnation, but only that he would
not increase the talent, which had byn
giuen him.

Math. 25.
12. & 30.

That we may the better see, how
vgly, and vnworthy the state of such
men is, Gerson brings this example. I-

imagine, (sayth he) that some Father
 who is maister of the house, and is a ge-
 neros & rich man, hath many sonnes,
 and all of them, very able to aduance
 his house, and to honour the extracti-
 on, whereof they come, by the indu-
 stry and good parres, which they haue;
 and that really they all apply them-
 selues to do it, except only one, who,
 whilest the rest were carrying them-
 selues like the Sonnes of such a parent,
 would for mere lazinesse and slouth sit
 still at home, and play the yong maister
 within doores, without putting him-
 selfe to do any thing, which might be
 worthy of his owne abilities, and of
 the noblenesse of such a Father, for the
 honour & increase of his house, when
 yet he was as able to do it, as any of the
 rest, if he would; but, he sayth, his
 meanes are already sufficient to make
 him passe a kind of quiet life, and that
 he couets no more honour or increase,
 nor meanes to take paynes, in order to
 any such end as that. The Father calles
 him, perswades with him, beseeches
 him to take more noble thoughts into
 his mind, representes to him his owne
 abilities,

To set our eyes on high things. 91

abilities, and good partes, the nobility of his bloud, the example of his Ancestours who are passed, & his brethren, who are present; and if after all this, he would not be brought out of his chimney-corner, nor procure to liue in a more noble ayre, it is cleare, that his Father would be much offended with him. Well then, iust so, saith Gerson, we being the Sonnes of God, and the brethren of Christ our Lord, our heauenly Father, is exhorting and animating vs towards Perfection, after this manner. Be not content, O you my children, with leading the liues of vulgar men. *Estote ergo vos perfecti, sicut & Pater vester in calis perfectus est.* Be perfect, as your heauenly Father is perfect. Behold the generosity and perfection of your Father, and behaue your selues like the Sonnes of such a one: *Ut sitis Filij Patris vestri, qui in calis est,* that men may find you, to be descended of your Father who is in heauen. Behold the example of your brethren, & cast your eyes vpon that elder brother of yours, which is Iesus Christ; For he it is, who hath honoured the whole house, though

Math. 5.

48.

Math. 5.

45.

though it cost him his bloud, & his very life; but for the obtrayning of that end, he accounted all that to be well employed. And if so high an example dazle your sight, let it be cast vpon the rest of your brethren, who were as weake as your selues, borne in sinne like you, full of passions, of temptations, of vntoward inclinations like you; for to this end doth the Church our Mother represent to vs, the example of the Saints, and solemnize their Feasts. And, if yet you will neede take it nearer hand, behold the examples of those brethren of yours, who were borne out of the same wombe, and of the same Religion and Society; and cast your eyes vpon a Father Ignatius, vpon a Francis Xauier, vpon a Francis de Borgia, vpon an Edmund Campian, and vpon such others like these, as you know. Procure to imitate them, and be not the dishonour of your lineage and of your Religious Order. And he, who after all this, shall not be animated to performe workes of valour and worth; but will needes content himselfe with leading an ordinary and vulgar life, is it not cleare,

cleare, that for as much as is on his part, he will giue disgust and offence to God himselfe, who is our Father, and ill example to his brethren, and that he deserves, that his heauenly Father should not acknowledge him for his Sonne, nor his brethren for their brother?

This therefore is that, whereof we are treating now, namely that we must haue high and generous thoughts; and that we must fixe our eyes and harres, vpon the performing of great and eminent thinges, to the end, that since through our frailty, we are not likely to reach so high as we aspire, yet at least we may not fall so low and short, as now we find our selues to be. Let vs carry our selues herein after such sort, as they do, who sell their merchandize; for in the beginning, they vse to aske more then the price, that afterward they may come to get the price; & like them, who in making bargaynes, vse to demaund beyond reason, that so the buyer may be drawne to giue as much as reason requires, according to that of the Prouerbes: *Iniquum petas, vt equum feras*, aske that, which is vniust, or rather

ther more then that which is iust, that
so they may come to giue as much. So
heere, say I, not that you should pre-
tend to that which is vniust; but to that
which is most reasonable & most iust.
Fixe I say, your eyes, vpon that which
is most iust, to the end that so you may
be able perhaps to acquire that which
indeed is iust. Demaund, and desire
that which is most precious, that
so you may grow to purchase, that
which is of meaner price. For if once
you aspire no further, the to that which
is meane, and that this is the vttermost
of your ambition, you will not be able
to reach so high, but will find your
selues to fall very farre short.

Heereby it may be vnderstood,
how important a thing it is, in the ex-
hortations and spirituall discourses,
which we are wont to make, to treat
things of great perfection, perswading
men to a most profound humility,
which may arriue to the very last de-
gree and step thereof, to a perfect mor-
tification of all our passions, and appe-
tites, to an entire conformity with
the will of God, and that in vs there
may

may not be found either any other wil,
or not will; then the will, or not will
of Almighty God; and that our whole
gust and ioy, may be placed in this, &
so also we may inferre of the other ver-
tues. Now some perhaps would say:
To what purpose should it serue, to
discourse and preach of so high thinges
to so weake auditours, yea and some-
times to men, who are but meere be-
ginners; and that if they speake of those
things to vs, which carryed proportion
to our weakenesse, and which were ea-
sy and plaine, we might perhaps profit
by them; but that these perfectiones,
which arriue, as it were, to the third
heauen, seeme not to speake to, or to
point at vs, but rather to an Apostle S.
Paul, and others like him? You haue no
reason in saying thus; for these perfecti-
ons point at you, and to you are we
speaking, when we speake thereof; yea
and vpon that very reason, for which
you alleage, that we should not speake
of them to you, euen for that it is, that
we must speake to you thereof. You
say, that because you are weake, we
must not speake of things so high; but

I say, that we must represent things to you, which are high, and of great perfection, to the end, that placing your eyes vpon them, you may come to reach that which standes with some reason, and not remayne so poore and vnprovidd of vertue, as otherwise you would be.

For this purpose, it also helpes much, both to read and heare the liues and examples of Saintes related, & to consider their excellent and heroicall vertues, which the Church proposes to vs, to the end, that since we are not likely to attaine so farre as they, we yet may animate our selues at least, to forsake the tepidity, wherein we are. And it bringes with it also another benefit. For we must be very proud, if we cannot find in our harts to be humbled and confounded by the consideration of the purity of Saints liues, and by the huge distance, wherein we are from them. S. Gregory declares this very well, by occasion of those wordes of Job: *Respiciet homines, & dicet, Peccavi.* He shall looke vpon iust and holy-men & so will hold himselfe for a grievous sinner,

Greg. lib.

24. mor. c.

9.

Job. 33.

27.

To surfer what is wanting. 97

sinner, and will be humbled and confounded, by the sight of those great examples. For as poure men do more visibly find their owne pouerty, when they chaunce to see the treasures of such as are mighty & rich; so the soule as S. Gregory sayth, doth humble it self, and knowes the pouerty thereof, so much the more, when it considers the memorable examples of the illustrious liues of Saints. S. Hieronie recountes of the Blessed S. Antony the Abbot, that hauing beene to visit S. Paul the first Ermitte, and hauing scene his sanctity to haue beene so great, his Disciples went out to meet him, and when they humbly asked, where he had beene, the Saint made the this answer with many teares: O wretched sinner that I am who vniustly enioy the name of a Religious man. I haue scene Elias, I haue scene a Iohn Baptist in the desert, & I haue scene a Paul in Paradise. And the like shing to this is read of the great Macarius, who going to visite certayne Monks, of his tyme, and discerning their great perfection, fell afterwards into tears with his owne disciples, and sayd: *Fieli Me-*

*Hier. in
vita Pauli
primi Ere-
mitæ.*

Macarius.

nachos, non sum ego Monachus. I haue seen Monkes, they indeed are Monks, but so am not I. Woe is me, who fallily carry the name of a Monke. That therefore which the Saint affirmed through their great humility, we may wel say of our selues with more truth; if we shal consider the example of the Saintes, and their Heroicall vertues: So that we must either procure to imitate their perfection, or els supply the want therof, by our owne humility and confusion; and thus we shall be much assisted by this good meanes, howsoeuer the world go.

How much it importes to make account of small matters, and not to vnderstande them.

C H A P. IX.

Eccl. 19.1

QUod spernit modica, paulatim decidet. He who doth despises little things, will come by little & little to catch a fall. This is a point of great importance, especially for such as aspire to perfection, because things of moment are

To make account of small things. 99
 are sufficiently recommended euen of
 themselves; but in those, which are of
 lesse importance, we are apt to be lesse
 carefull, as not thinking that they de-
 serue so much regard; and we fancy as
 if the matter were not great, and as if
 we were concerned little in them: but
 this is a very great errour; for we are
 not a little, but much concerned. And
 therefore the holy Ghost admonishes vs
 by the aforeseyd wordes of the Wise-
 man, to take heed of this danger, be-
 cause he who despises small thinges,
 as making no account thereof, will
 grow by little and little to fall into
 great ones. And this reason alone, is
 sufficient both to perswade and fright
 vs, concerning this subiect, since it is
 the discourse and counsell of the Holy
 Ghost. S. Bernard treats this point ex-
 cellently well: *A minimis incipiunt, qui
 in maxima proueniunt.* They beginne by
 small faults, who grow afterwarde to
 commit grievous sinnes. Vnbeguile
 your selues, sayth the Saint, for that
 common sentence is very true: *Nemo
 repente fit summus.* No man (ordinarily
 speaking) growes suddenly to be ei-
 ther

*Bernar. de
 ord. c. 18.
 & morum
 institut.*

ther very ill, or very good; but both the good and the ill, increases by little & little. And as great sicknesses of the body are wont to be engendred by certaine insensible degrees, so also are the spirituall sicknesses and miseries of the soule. And therefore when you see certaine great and strong falls in some who were the seruants of God, you must not thinke, sayth the Saint, that the hurt began but then; for no man, who hath perseuered long in a course of vertue, comes suddenly to slide, and fall into any grieuous sinne, but by reason that first he grew carelesse in thinges, which were lighter, and lesse, whereby the strength of his soule grew by little and little to loose it selfe; & then he deserved, that God should take off his hand, of particuler fauour from him, and thus he grew to be more easily overcome, when the great temptation assaulted him.

Cassianus declares this by a comparison, which is very proper, but indeed it was brought by the holy Ghost himselfe. He sayth, that houses fall not downe at once, but first there are little wayes

Bern. serm
contraposition
in
gratitud.

Cassian.
collat. 6.
Abbat.
Theodor.

To make account of small things. 101

wayes whereby a few droppes of raine get in, and they by little and little, go roting the timber of the building, and then pierce into the walles, and make them moyst and soft, and thus go by degrees, to the foundations, by means wherof the house comes to yter ruine. & so falls flat downe in a night: In pi-
grijs humiliabitur contignatio, & in infir-
mata manuum, perstillabit domus. Tho-
rough the slouth of not repaying a house at the first, whilst the hurt was small, and by reason of not removing the cause by not hindring the water from getting in, the house fell after- ward vpon a sudden. In this sort, sayth *Cassianus* grow men to get great failes, and to end in extreme misery. At the first, certaine little affections and passions of ours, like so many insensible passages of water, get by little and little into our soules, & go penetrating, and softening, and weakening the strength thereof, and so the whole building goes to ruine, only because we would not apply our selues early to repaire it, when the hurt was small, and because we neglected to stoppe

Ecc. 10.
18.

those little holes, wherby the first was
 rer got in. Because such a one would
 make no account of small matters; he
 grew therefore one day to be tempted
 and the next day to be conquered; so
 farre, as euen to forsake his Religious
 course. I would to Christ there were
 not so great experience of truth of this
 in the world, as we see there is. It real-
 ly giues occasion of great feare, yea &
 euen of horrour, to consider how light
 and little those things were, vpon
 which the destruction of some began;
 who came to extreme misery after-
 wards. The Diuell wants no wit, he
 settis not at the first dash vpon the ser-
 uants of God; with tempting them to
 commit great sinnes; he is craftier then
 so. By winning them to certaine little
 and sleight defects, and mouing them
 by little and little after an insensible
 kind of manner; he makes a thift to do
 his businesse much better, then if he in-
 ticed them to greater things. For if in-
 stantly he should moue them to mortall
 sinnes, he would easily be discouered;
 and soone dismissed; but making his
 entry by meanes of such as are little &
 light

To make account of small things. 103
light, he is not perceaued, nor dismiss-
sed, but admitted.

For this reason S. Gregory sayth,
that in some sorte it may be accounted *Greg. 3. p.*
for a greater danger, to be tempted *pastor. ad-*
with lesse, then with greater sinnes. *monit. 35.*

For the greater, by how much they
are more clearly knowne, so much
through the knowledge of the mis-
chiefe which they breed, they moue a
man more to auoid them, and to reform
methemselues more speedily, when
they fall into them. But as for lesse
sinnes, by how much the lesse they are
discouered, so much the lesse easily are
they declined; and because also they
are not much apprehended, they
to be reiterated and continued, and
man remaines in them of course; & he
neuer puts on a masculine resolution
to discharge them. And thus of little
sinnes, they quickly make a shift to
become great.

S. Chrysostome agrees very well this
and tells vs of a thing, which himselfe
calls strange: *Mirabile quidem. & inau-*
ditum dicere audeo, solet mihi nonnumquam *Chrysost.*
non tanto studio magna videri esse peccata *hom. 87.*
theum. *super Ma-*

104 The I. Treatise. Chap. IX. T
 vitanda, quanto parua & vilia. Illa enim
 vt auersemur, ipsa pescati natura officit;
 hac autem, hac ipsa re, quia parua sunt,
 desides reddunt, & dum contemnuntur, non
 potest ad expulsionem eorum animus gene-
 rose insurgere; vnde cito ex paruis, maxi-
 ma fiunt, negligentia nostra. I will ad-
 venture to tell you a strange thing,
 which you will thinke to be new, &
 neuer heard of. And it is, that sometime
 we must vse more care and dili-
 gence for the auoyding of little sinnes;
 then of great ones. For great ones,
 bring a kind of horreur with them in
 their armes, and so we may easily ab-
 horre them, and fly from them; but
 little ones by the contrary reason, in-
 duce vs to a kind of carelesse nesse and
 negligence; and because we acconte
 not much of them, we hardly resolute
 to leaue them, and so they come to do
 vs extreme hurt.

For this cause the Diuell sets vp
 great rests against vs by this meanes,
 and thereby enters vpon, and assaults
 Religious men, and other seruants of
 God, as knowing very well that there-
 by he hath got a passage to make them
 fall

To make account of small things. 105

fall afterwarde, into greater sinnes.

And so S. Augustine sayth: *Quid enim interest ad naufragium, utrum vna grandi flumine navis operiatur & obruatur, an paulatim subrepens aqua in sentinam, & per negligentiam derelicta, atque contempta impleat nauem, atque submorgat?* What importes it, whether the water found his way by a great or little passage into the ship, if in fine it grow thereby to sinke? One importes as much as the other, since the end of them both is the same. And so also the Diuell will be very indifferent, whether he enter into your soules by greater or lesser sinnes, if in fine he atriue to what he pretended, which is, first to draw you downe and then to swallow you vp.

Ex minimis guttis multiplicatis inundationes aquarum fiunt: quae etiam magna aliquando moenia subruunt: per modicam rimam aqua latenter in nauem influir, donec submergatur. From little droppes of water multiplyed, there grow great inundations, and so stiffe currentes, as that they lay great walles and buldinges so strong castles euen with the ground, and by some little cleft or chinke, will

Aug. epist.
108. ad
Seleucianum
et habet
de penit.
lib. 1. ca.
Tres Jans.

S. Roman.
prose. Re-
lig. cap. 10.

water enter secretly, and by little and little into a ship, & then sent it downe into the bottome of the sea.

August.

super illud

Psal. 66.

Ex gressu

in terra

dirigis.

For this reason, S. Augustine sayth, that as when any ship springes a leake, men must diligently betake themselves to the Pumpe, and draw the water out, that so the Vessell may not sinke; so must we by meanes of our prayer and examen, go ever drawing vp, and casting out those imperfections and faults, which by little and little steale in vpon vs, that so we may not sinke & drown.

This must be the exercise of a Religious man, he must instantly and continually haue recourse to his remedies, and if not, he will be sure to runne hazard. And in another place, the Saint saith: *Præcauisti magna, de minutis quid agis? An non times minuta? Protecisti mo-*

August.

Psal. 19.

circa illud:

Multipli-

cata sunt

supercapil-

los capitis

mei.

lem; vide ne arenâ obruaris. You haue auoyded and escaped from those waues, and stormes, and from the greater sort of dangers, which occurre in that tempestuous sea of the world; but take heed, that now your vessell come not to split in the very hauen of Religion, by striking it selfe vpon the sands. Take heed you grow not to runne hazard,

and

To make account of small things. For
and in the end to loose your selues by
meanes of certaine poore and little
things; for then it will serue you to
smal purpose, to haue declined & fled
from great wones; as it would be of
no benefit for a ship to haue wrought
it selfe out of great dangers & tempests,
and from the midst of mighty cliffes
and rockes, if after ward in the haue
it should chaunce to strike it selfe vpon
the sandes.

Of another principall reason, why it im-
portes very much, to make account of
small things.

C H A P. X.

IT also importes much, to make ac-
count of little things for another
very principall reason, which is, that
if we be negligent & carelesse in small
things, & make light account of the,
we haue much cause to feare, that Al-
mighty God will for that reason, doe
by vs his particuler and especiall helps
and graces, by meanes whereof we
might both resist temptations, and so
not

208 The 1. Treatise Chap. X. of
not fall into greater sinne, and obtaine
also that vertue and perfection, which
we desire; and thus we shall grow in-
to great mischief.

To the end, that we may the bet-
ter vnderstand this, it will be necessa-
ry for vs, to presuppose a certaine
point of sound Theology, which Saint
Paul, writing to the Corinthians hath
taught vs; And it is this. Our Lord
God neuer denyes, all necessary, and
sufficient supernaturall help, and suc-
cour; Wherby, if a man wil, he may re-
mayne vn-ouercome by any temptati-
on, and may be able victoriously to re-

1. Cor. 10.

13.

Fidelis autem Deus est. qui non parietur vos tentari, supra id, quod potestis; sed faciet, etiam cum tentatione prouentum, ut passis sustinere. God is faythfull, saith the Apostle, and you may well make your selues sure, that he will not permit you to be tempted beyond that, which you are able to beare; but if he add more troubles to you, and permit greater temptations to assault you, he will also support you with greater succour and saueur; to the end, that you may come off cleare from them.

To make account of small things. 109

not only without hurt, but with much
spirituall profit and increase. But now
you must consider, that there is another
kind of more especiall; and particular
help or grace; without which a man
might resist and overcome the tempta-
tion, if he would serve himselfe, as he
ought, of that former supernaturall
help, which is more generall; but ma-
ny times a man resistes not the tempta-
tion by meanes of that generall help,
without this other more particular
help, which God giues; and yet still
not because he cannot, but because he
will not do it; for if he would he might
well resist, by meanes of that more ge-
nerall help, in regard it is sufficient for
that purpose, if the man would do his
part as he ought; and so his being over-
come, and falling by that temptation
shall be through his owne fault, be-
cause he falls by the consent of his
owne will; Be yet, if God at that time,
had vouchsafed to allow him this o-
ther especiall grace and help, he would
not have fallen.

Comming therefore to our pur-
pose I say, that God imparts not this
second

second help and succour, which is particular, superabundant, and efficacious, to all persons, or at all times; because this is a most particular bounty & grace of his, and so God gives it only where he is graciously pleased; and to such as use to be liberall towards him, according to that of the Prophet: *Cum sancto sanctus eris, Et cum viro innocente innocens eris, Et cum electo electus eris, Et cum perverso perversus eris*: Another translation (sayth: *Cum benigno benignus eris, cum liberali liberalis eris, cum sincero & candido, sincere & candidè agis, Et cum perverso perversè agis*: With the holy man, O Lord, thou wilt be holy, and with the benigne, thou wilt be benigne; and with him, who is sincere and liberall, thou wilt be liberall and sincere. And if a man will not be such towards thee, thou well knowest how to pay such a one, in his owne coynes. And this is that very thing, which our Father expressed for us in his Rules. How much more for every man shall, ynite himselfe to our Lord God, and shew himselfe more liberall with his divine Maiessty, so much more liberall shall he finde God to be with him,

Psal. 13.
26.

Reg. 19.
Summa.
Constit.

To make account of small things. Let
him, and himselfe will be the better
disposed to receaue daily greater graces
& spirituall gifts, at the hands of God:
and the same is also the doctrine of S.

Gregory Nazianzen, & other Saints.

What this thing is, of being liberall
towards God, will be easily vnder-
stood, by considering, what it is to be
liberall towards men. One man is then
liberall towards another, when he
gives him not that which he owes, &
is obliged to pay, but that to which he
is not obliged, and which is more, then
he owes. This I say, is liberality, and
that other no. For that is but iustice
and obligation. Now in the same
manner it is, when a man walkes
with great care and diligence towards
the pleasing of Almighty God, not
not only in things of obligation, but in
things also of supererogation and per-
fection; and not only in great things,
but even in the very least: this indeed
is to be liberall towards Almighty
God. Now therefore, with such as are
so liberall, God is also very liberall.
These are the men in fauour with God,
and vpon whome he heapes benefits;

Greg. Na-
zian. orat.
de Pau-
pert. amo.
et Macha.
Ægypt. ho-
mil. 19.

to these he gives not only those generall helpes, which may suffice for their resisting and overcoming temptations; but those others also, which are especiall, superabundant and efficacious, by meanes whereof they shall fall by no meanes, in the same temptations. But then on the other side, if you be not liberall towards God, with what face can you expect, that God should be liberall towards you? If you be close-handed with God, you deserve that he should be close-handed with you. If you will be so poore and wretched, as go measuring & pinching as by a strait compasse, or line, to consider thus within your selues: *Am I obliged, or not obliged? Doth this oblige under sinne, or not oblige? Is this a mortall sinne, or is it veniall?* This, I say, is to play the wretch with God, since you will be sure to pay him no more, than lust what you owe, and perhaps you will come short even of this. But God knowes also, how to be close-handed towards you, and will also do you no more fauour, then that, to which he hath bound himselfe by his own word. He will give you those generall

generall and necessary helpes, which he giues to all, the same being competent, and sufficient to enable you to resist temptations, & not to be overcome by them. But you may with much reason feare, that he will not vouchsafe those especiall, superabundant, and efficacious helpes which he is wont to impart to such, as carry themselves liberally towards him, and that so you may be overcome by the temptation, and fall into sinne.

This is that which commonly the Deuines and Saints are wont to say, namely, that one sinne vses, to be the punishment of another. For this is to be vnderstood, because a man through his former sinne, demerited the especiall and particuler help of God: in punishment of that first sinne, and made himselfe vnworthy of it, & so he fell into the second. And the same they also ascribe of veniall sinnes, yea which is more, euen of the defects and negligences and carelesse nesse, wherewith men liue; for they say, that a man euen

H

by

Greg. lib. 10. mor. c. 14. & 3. p. Pass. admonis
S. Thom. 1. 2. q. 88. art. 3. & alijs.

Aug. ser.
244. de
tem. post
med. &
ser. 88.
prope ini-
tium. & in
illud psal.
66. Et ge-
tes in terra
dirigi.
Hieron. ad
Celam. ep.
1. Chrys.
in c. 2. ge-
ne. hom. 2.
& hom.
87. in
Math. &
ser. de le-
num pec-
cato. peric.
Bern. ser.
59. in Cât.
Isid. lb. 2.
de sum. Bo.
Basil. orat.
3. de iuin.
prope init.
& in Reg.
Ere. q. 4.
34. Glosa.

by these means may demerite, & make himselfe vnworthy of the especiall & efficacious succour of God, whereby he might haue perseuered, and indeed haue ouercome the temptation, and now without it, he will be ouercome, and commit sinne. And in this sort do some of the Saints declare, those words

Ecccl. 10.

of the Wiseman: *Qui modica spernit, paulatim decidet*. That becaule a man despises small things, making light accout thereof, he goes demeriting that especiall help of Almighty God, & makes himselfe vnworthy thereof; and so he comes to fall into great sinnes. In the same manner do they also explicate that passage of the Apocalyps: *Quia tepidus es, incipiam te euomere ex ore meo*.

Apoc. 3.
16.

Almighty God hath not yet wholly vomited & cast the tepide man out of his mouth; but already he hath begunne to do it. And by reason of that slackenesse, wherein he liues, and because he committs certaine faultes aduisedly and vpon cold bloud, and goes demeriting that especiall and efficacious help, without which he will fall into greater sinner, then Almighty God will

To make account of small things. 115
will make an end of vomiting him vp,
and casting him out.

Let vs therefore now, euery one
of vs consider, how much reason we
may haue to feare, least we demerite,
and make our selues vnworthy of this
especiall succour and help of God, by
reason of our tepidity and slackenesse
in his seruice. How often do we find
our selues fiercely set vpon, and much
endangered by temptations; and many
times we find our selues in doubt, whe-
ther we detained our selues in those
thoughts or no, and whether we con-
sented, or no, and whether such a
thing arrued to be a sinne, or no? O
how happy would it haue beene for vs
at those pinches, and in those straights,
to haue beene formerly liberall with
Almighty God, and to haue made our
selues lesse vnworthy of that liberal &
especial kind of help, by meanes wher-
of we might haue beene safe, and still
haue remayned fast on foot; and with-
out which we shall see our selues in
in great danger, and peraduenture be
overcome.

3. Chrysostome holdes this for a ve-

Chrysost.
hom. 60.
super Gen.

ry principall means, towards the ouer-
comming of temptations, He goes dis-
coursing of our enemy the Diuel, & of
the continuall warre, which he makes

Chrys. ho- mil. 60. su- per Genes. against vs, and sayth thus: *Scitu enim, quod hostem habemus perpetuum, & fœderis nescium; vnde nobis magna vigilatiâ opus est.*

You know well, O my Brethren, that we haue an euerlasting enemy of the Diuell, who is alwayes making warre against vs, nor doth he sleep or rest, nor is there any truce to be had with this Tyrant, and therefore we must euer go well armed, and with great watchfulnesse and care, least we be conquered by him. But how shall we now be armed, and provided to preuent his conquest, but by our owne ob-
taining the victory and continually ouerbearing the traitor? Do you know, how this is to be done, sayth S. Chri-
stosome? *Non aliter autem eum vincemus, quàm si per vitam optimam, supernum nobis auxilium conciliemus.* The most excellēt meanes to compasse this, will be, to haue formerly made prouision, and as it were bespoken this especiall help at the hands of God, by the sanctity of our
owne

To make account of small things. Y 17
 owne liues. By this meanes we shall
 euer ouercome, *Et non aliter*; But not
 else, and let that word be noted. The
 same doth S. Basil say in these wordes: *Basil. in*
Qui à Deo se optat inuari, is numquam de- *Const. Mō.*
serit, quod se addebet officium suum; qui au- *cap. 2.*
tem hoc facit, is diuino auxilio numquam de-
stituitur; quapropter danda in eo opera est,
ne vlla in re conscientia nostra nos condem-
net. He who desires to be assisted by
 our Lord, must neuer be wanting on
 his owne part; and he who performes
 that, shall neuer be forsaken of Almight
 ty God; and therefore we must haue
 great care, that we do nothing, wherof
 our conscience may haue remorse. *Saint*
Basil inferres well, what vse we are to
 make of this doctrine: namely, that we
 must be very carefull in the perfor
 mance of our spirituall exercises, and
 indeed of all our actions, to the end,
 that our Conscience neuer be iustly of
 fended, & that so we may be the more
 worthy, of the especiall help of Gods
 grace. Wherby we may easily discerne,
 how highly it importes vs to make
 much accout of small matters, if indeed
 they may well be accounted small,

which may bring vs so great good, & by the neglect whereof we may growe subiect to so great ill. For this reason, sayth the Wiseman: *Quoties Deum, nihil negligit*; He, who truly feares God, will not be carelesse of any thing, how little soeuer it may be. Because he knowes well, that from the smaller sort of sinnes a man steppes by little & little, into the greater; and because also he feares, that if he once in these little thinges giue ouer being liberall with Almighty God, God will also leaue in greater thinges, to be liberall with him.

Eccles. 7.
29.

For conclusion I say, that this is a point of so great esteeme, and we must hold it in so high account, that we may safely take it for a generall rule, that so long as a man shall make account of light and little thinges, he shall trauell in a safe way, and shall receaue fauours of our Lord; and so on the other side, that if he esteeme them little, he will be subiect to much danger, which euer enters vpon Religious men by this meanes. And Christ our Lord gaue vs to vnderstand this truth, in this man-

To make account of small things. 119

ner. He who is faithfull in little, will be also faithfull in much; and he who in little is vnfaithfull, will also be vnfaithfull in greater matters. And therefore when any man shall haue a mind to see, how the world goes with him in the way of spirituall profit, more or lesse, (and it is but good reason, that we should reflect now and then vpon this point) let him examine himselfe by this rule, & consider, whether he make account of small matters, or else whether he be not growing into a kind of liberty to passe them ouer. And if once he find, that now he reflectes not much vpon them, and that his Conscience checkes not vpon that occasion, as it was wont to do, let him procure with all care to reforme himselfe. S. Basil sayth, That when once the Diuell findes, that he cannot make vs go out of Religion, he procures by all meanes to perswade vs, not to apply our selues to perfection; and not to make account of small matters, deceauing vs with a vaine security, that God will not be lost for those toyes. But we, on the other side, must endeavour, that as he shall not be able to make vs leaue Re-

H 4 ligio.

Luc. 16.
10.

Basil. ser.
de renu-
ciat. sacu-
larijs, et
spiritu pro-
fect.

Eccles. 7.
29.

which may bring vs so great good, & by the neglect whereof we may growe subiect to so great ill. For this reason, sayth the Wiseman: *Quātimet Deum, nihil negligit*; He, who truly feares God, will not be carelesse of any thing, how little soeuer it may be. Because he knowes well, that from the smaller sort of finnes a man steppes by little & little, into the greater; and because also he feares, that if he once in these little thinges giue ouer being liberall with Almighty God, God will also leaue in greater thinges, to be liberall with him.

For conclusion I say, that this is a point of so great esteeme, and we must hold it in so high account, that we may safely take it for a generall rule, that so long as a man shall make account of light and little thinges, he shall tranell in a safe way, and shall receaue fauours of our Lord; and so on the other side, that if he esteeme them little, he will be subiect to much danger, which euer enters vpon Religious men by this meanes. And Christ our Lord gaue vs to vnderstand this truth, in this manner.

To make account of small things. 119

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Luc. 16.
10.

Basil. ser.
de renu-
cat. sacu-
lissius, et
spiritu pro-
fect.

Igiō, so neither shall it be in his power to make vs neglect our study of perfection : but that we will addict our selues to the purchase thereof, by all possible meanes; making much account of all those things, which concerne it, how little so euer they may be.

That we are not to vndertake the businesse of our increase in spirit, after a generall, but after a particuler manner; & how highly it imports, that we put in practise those good purposes and desires, which our Lord giues vs.

CHAP. XI.

*Cassian.
collat. 5. c.
3. & 4.*

IT will also help vs much towards our good in this kind, that we serue our selues of another meanes which is vsually prescribed by the Maisters of spirituall life, namely that we must not vndertake this businesse of our spirituall profit, in general or in commō, but after a particuler manner by little and little. *Cassianus* relates, how the Abbot *Moyse* asked his Monkes in a cer-

certaine spirituall conference, what that was, to which they pretended by so great labours, so great abstinences, and watches, so great prayer and mortification, and what in fine was their end? They answered, that it was to get the kingdome of Heauen. Vpon this he replyed thus, and sayd: That, is indeed the last end; but I aske you not concerning it, but cōcerning your particuler & immediate end, towards which you are to looke, that so you may arriue to that last end. For though the husband-man whose end is to get aboundance of bread, & to haue means to passe his life after a plentifull manner, employes all care and diligence, in dressing and cultiuating the earth, and in freing it from weedes, because these thinges are necessary meanes to that other end; and though the Merchants end be to become rich, yet al his care is placed in considering, what kind of trade may be fittest for him, & how he may be able to driue it best for the compassing of this end thereby, & to that go all his diligences and cares: iust so is the Religious mā to proceed.

For it is not enough, that he say in generall: *I pretend to be saved, I would gladly be a good Religious man, I desire to be perfect*; but he must consider, after a particular manner, what passion or vice it is, which hinders him most, and of what vertue he is in greatest need; & he must procure the same; for thus going on by little and little, and proceeding on with diligence & care, sometyes in pursuite of one vertue, and sometyes of another, he shal the better obtaine what he desires. This is that meane which that other Father of the desert gave to that Monke, who after he had beene full of diligence & fervour, grew to slacke his speed in his spirituall exercises, and came at length to be very slothfull. But now desiring to returne to his former more happy state, & finding his wayes stopped; and conceauing that it would be hard, and not knowing then, how to beginne; the other comforted, & encouraged him by a certaine parable or example of another, who had sent his sonne to purge and cleanse a Farme of his, which was al ouer growen with
 thornes

*In vitis
 Patrum.*

thornes and weedes; & the sonne seeing how much there was to do, grew disheartened thereby, and layd himself to sleep, and did nothing in the businesse. But his Father sayd thus to him: My sonne, thou must not consider, nor take all that in grosse, which thou art to do vpon this ground; but euery day a little, namely as much as the body of one man may do. He wrought after that manner, and thus in a little tyme the whole Farme was cleansed.

And heere it is to be noted, that one of the chiefe causes, why we reap little profit, and why our Lord doth vs no more fauour, is because we put not those good desires and purposes in practise, wherewith we are inspired by him, and so because we make him no better account, of what he hath giuen, he withholdes his hand from giuing more, and greater thinges. And as a schoole-maister will not remoue one of his schollers to a higher Forme, whilest he sees, that he hath not been diligent in the Forme he held; so our Lord is wont to proceed with vs, in carrying vs on more or lesse, towards perfecti-

M. Anila
lib. 1. de
las Epist.
fol. 241.

perfection. He forbears vouchsafing vs greater benefits, so much the more as we forbear to cooperate with such as he had formerly imparted; and how much the more a man goes animating himselfe, to put those good desires in execution, which our Lord communicates to him in tyme of prayer, or otherwise; so much the more doth he oblige our Lord to shew him greater fauours. The Doctour Father Anila sayth very well: *That he who makes good use of what he knowes, shall obtaine light to see what he knowes not yet.* And that he, who doth not so, will hardly find a fit tongue, wherewith to aske it, since he will deserue such an answer as this: *To what end would you further know my will and pleasure, since in that which you know, you comply not with it?* If you execute not those desires, which our Lord giues you, and with what colour can you pretend, that he should do you fauour in greater thinges? And with what face shall you be able to beg in your Prayer, that he will graunt you this or that, which you desire, and which indeed you want, if you will
not

not mend, or mortify your selues in somewhat els, wherein you haue much need to be reformed, and to which purpose God hath already giuen you many holy desires, and inspirations? For my parte, I cannot see, how that man can lift vp his eyes to God, for the obtrayning of greater thinges, who will not retyre himselte, from some fault, which he hath, but wittingly giues way to himselte, for the falling into it, againe and agayne. If therefore we desire indeed to profit, and that our Lord should do vs many fauours, let vs become very diligent in putting those desires and inspirations in practise, which he is pleased to giue to vs.

It is the common doctrine of the Saints, that he, who makes good vse of the benefits, which he hath already receaued, becomes worthy of more, and so on the other side, that he deserues no new ones, who makes no good account for the old. The Wiseman in the 16. Chapter of Wisedome, proposes this question. What is the reason, why the *Manna* was wont to be dissolued by the first beame of the Sunne, and that
after-

afterward it grew good for nothing, & yet if they applyed it to the fire, it was not melted by it, nor put to any prejudice at all, though yet still the heate of the fire, were more forcible, then that of the Sunne-beame? And the Wiseman giues this answer to himselfe, in the end of the same Chapter, *Vt notum omnibus esset, quoniam oportet praeuenire solem, ad benedictionem tuam.* That all the world might know, that we must be careful to make good vse of the fauours and benefits, which we receaue from the hand of our Lord, and that, in punishment of ingratitude and slouth of him, who would not rise before the Sunne, to take profit by that fauour, which our Lord had done him, God permitted the same Sunne to take away his dinner, euen as it were, from betweene his very teeth. This is also

Sap. 16.
28.

Luc. 9. 12

that, which Christ our Lord himselfe, did most admirably declare to vs, in his holy Ghospel vnder the parable of that Prince, who hauing distributed his goods amongst his seruants, that they might negotiate therewith, did (after he had taken possession of his State)

cal

cal them to account, and went making them commanders, and governours of as many severall Cittyes, as they had severally gayned talents. Him, who had gained ten talents, he made the governour of ten Cittyes, and him, who had gayned five, of five. Giuing vs thereby to vnderstād, that as that King had rewarded the industry, and fidelity of his seruants with so great excesse, as there is difference betweene ten Cittyes and ten talents; so also, if we put the inspirations of God in execution, & if we be found loyall and faithfull in this kind of correspondence with him; that excesse will be also very great, wherewith our Lord will increase his heavenly gifts towards vs. And so, on the other side, if we corresponde not with him, as we ought; not only will he take that from vs, which he hath already giuen, but we shall be so severely punished withall, as that ill seruant was, who made no profit or vse at all, of that talent, which he had receaued from his Lord.

It is recounted of that most famous paynter Apelles, that how much fouler employ-

Refers
Plin. l. 35.
nat. hist.
cap. 10

employēt otherwise, he might chance to haue, he neuer suffered day to passe, without some exercise of his art; but stealing time from other businesses, which occurred he was wont to remember himselfe by these words: *Hodie nullam lineam duxi*; Hitherto I haue not drawne any one line of art, all this day. And from thence, this speech is now grown applyable by way of proverbe, to men of any state, when they passe ouer any day without some exercise of themselves therein. But in the meane time, that man grew so great, & so absolute a Maister by this meanes. And now, if you also will grow to be a good and perfect Religious man; let no one day passe, wherein you draw not some line, and wherein you make not some addition to your vertue. Be daily ouercoming & mortifying yourselves in some particuler; be daily freeing your actions from some fault, or other; for by this meanes you will mende, and improve daily. And when you come to your examen of the Forenoone, consider whether or no, that halfe day hath not passed, without

Not to vse lesse seruour in deuotion. 179
without the addition of some line, or
point, in the way of vertue, and say:
Hodie nullam lineam duxi. Alas; I haue not
to day, aduanced one pace towards vertue,
nor haue I mortified my selfe in any thing,
nor made any act of humility, though yet oc-
casions thereof were presented vnto me. Hi-
therto this day is lost to me; but so shall not
to morow, no nor yet this euening be. And af-
ter this manner, we shall grow by little and
little, to profit more then a little.

That it will help vs much, towards the ob-
taining of perfection, not to commit
any faultes at all of set purpose,
nor to go on lesse, in the ser-
uour of our deuotion.

CHAP. XII.

VVE shall receaue much bene-
fit towards our encrease in
vertue and Perfection, if we procure to
commit no faultes at all, of set pur-
pose. There are two kindes of veni-
all faultes or sinnes. The one, into
which they, who most feare God, are
wont to fall through infirmity, or
I by

*Ludo. Blo.
in specul.
spir. c. 6.*

by ignorance, or surprise, or want of reflection, and so not without some little negligence, and lacke of care: But these finnes cause no troublesome kind of griefe, but only humility, as those seruants of God, who walke before him in the way of truth, know by experience. Nor do they obserue that our Lord turnes his face at al from them by occasion of those finnes; but they rather find after an euident manner, that our Lord impartes new fauours and a fresh kind of spirit to them, through the humble recourse, which they make to his Diuine Maiesty by occasion thereof. Other veniall sinns there be, which are committed of set purpose, & with reflection, by such, as are tepide and remisse in the seruice of God; and these giue impediment to great blessings, which we should receaue, if we committed not those finnes. In regard of these, our Lord many times lookes lesse graciously vpon vs in our time of prayer, & forbears to do vs many fauours. And therefore if we desire to profit, and that our Lord may be good to vs, we must procure to commit no faultes at all of
set

Not to vse lesse fervour of deuotion. 131
set purpose. It is enough that we fall
into many, through our ignorance,
and inaduertence, and let vs not add
more to the heape. It is enough, that
we are distracted in our prayer through
the instability of our imagination, but
let vs not be voluntarily distracted. It
is enough, that through our frailty we
offend our Rules; but let vs not breake
them, of set purpose.

8. Basil assignes another meanes for
the obtaining of Perfection, which he
sayth, is very proper to make vs im-
prooue much in a short time; and it is,
*That we make no pauses, or stands in the
way of vertue.* Some there are, who by
fits make certayne offers, and then a
stand. But carry you on what you haue
begunne, and make not these standes;
for in the way of a spirituall life, you
shall find your selfe more tyred by ma-
king them, then by forbearing them.

There is a great deale of difference
betweene the exercises of the spirit &
of the body: *Quia caro operando deficit,
spiritus operando proficit.* Because in the
case of corporall exercises, how much
the more the body labours and toyles,

Basilius.

so much the fainter it is; the mind, the more it workes, the more strength it gets. And so the proverbe sayth: *Arcum frangit intentio, animum remissio*. The bow is spoyled by much bending, but the mind is spoyled by much loosening.

*Ambr. lib.
unico de
Pœnit. c.
10.*

S. Ambrose saith, That as it is a more easy taske, for a man to conserue his innocency by not falling into sinne, then after hauing fallen, to do true pennance: so it is also more easy, to conserue the seruour of deuotion and prayer, then to recouer it, after the distraction of some dayes. The smyth, when he takes the burning iron out of the fire, to the end that it may continue soft and supple, and so, as that the hammer may be able to beate and worke it according to his mind, doth not suffer it to coole outright, but before it be wholly cold he returnes it to the fire againe, that so it may quickly be persited according to that forme which he designs; and so must we neuer permit, that the heate of our deuotion decay: for if the hart grow cold and stiffe, it will hardly returne to the first seruour. And experience telles vs, that how much

Not to vse lesse seruour of deuotion. 133
much soeuer a man hath profited, and
how farre soeuer he hath proceeded in
vertue, if he neglect himselfe for a
while, and diuert his mind from those
thoughts, and forbear to performe his
good exercises, he will loose all that in
a little time, which he had gotten in
much: and that in such sort, that he will
not seeme to haue any touch of what
he possessed before, and can hardly re-
turne from whence he fell, so great is
the difficulty, which he findes. But
now they on the other side, who pro-
ceed with seruour, and procure alwaies
to conserue the warmth of their deu-
tion, passing on in their good exercises,
and perseuering therein, hold them-
selues vp with ease, and profit much in
short tyme. And the reason hereof also
is, because these men loose no time, nor
euer vndoe what they had formerly
done, as the manner of tepide and re-
misse persons is, all whose life is spent
in doing and vndoing, and in weauing
and vnweauing, & so they neuer make
an end of their worke: whereas those
others not only destroy not what they
had done, but they still go on, and by
the

the continuall exercise of their minds, they dayly increase their strength, and get greater facility both to do better, & to do more, and so they improve themselves very much. This is that, which

Prou. 10.

4.

the Wiseman sayd: *Egestatem operata est manus remissa, manus autem fortium diuitias parat.* He who will worke dili-

Prou. 13.

4.

gently, shall grow rich, but he who will not worke, shall begge. *Anima autem operantium impinguabitur.*

A certaine Father made a certaine comparison, of such Religious as were tepide and remisse, with such others, as were full of diligence and seruour, and he sayd, that the slouthfull Religious, who vnder coulour of antiquity, pretend that they may lawfully be weary of working, & procure not to proceed in the way of spirit, are like certaine old seruants in the houses of great Lords, who now serue no longer, but to make a shew, and to set themselves downe at the House-gate, and to tell old tales or stories of the former time, and the Lord giues them their wages & dyet, as to old seruants of the house; but they are not the men, who haue fauour
nor

Not to vse lesse seruour of deuotion. 135
nor do they thriue with their Lord,
who indeed doth scarce consider, whe-
ther they serue him or no. But on the
other side, you shall see certaine other
seruants who are come lately thither,
and are yong and diligent, and sollici-
tous in the seruice of their Lord: and
who know not how to stand still, or
once to set themselues downe in a
whole day, and the Lord hath euen
hardly commaunded any thing, but
you shall see it already dispatched and
done. These are the men of fauour, and
these are they, who thriue and rise vn-
der their Lord. And thus are diligent,
& seruorous Religious men.

*Of three other meanes, which help vs to
proceed in the way of Vertue.*

CHAP. XIII.

S. Basil assignes one good meanes, *Basil. ser. de abdicat. return.*
whereby we may profit much, and
it is commonly giuen by al the Saints,
That we must cast our eyes vpon the best of
our Brethren, and such are most exemplar
and eminent in vertue, whome we must pre-

Anton.
Abbas.

cure to imitate . The same did the Blessed S. Anthony the Abbot, advise, and say, That a Religious man must carry himselfe like the good be, which gathers her hony from all the flowers . For of one we must learne modesty, of another silence, of another patience, of another obedience, of another indifferency and resignation, and in fine, we must see what shines most in euery one, that so he may be imitated therein . And thus we read that himselfe did, whereby he grew so great a Saint . This is one of the chiefe benefits, which we haue in Religion, in regard whereof S. Hierome prefers the liuing in society before solitude, & advises men to betake themselues rather to that, then this , *Vt ab alijs discas humilitatem, ab alijs patientiam, hic te silentium, ille te doceat mansuetudinem* . That you may learne humility of one, of another patience, that this mā may teach you silence, & that other, meeknesse .

Carilus.

A certaine Philosopher called Carilus, a principall man, & one who was very eminent amongst the Lacedemonians, being asked, which Republike he held to be the best of the world, he made

made this answer, That, wherein the
Citizens contend, which of them may be the
 most vertuous, and this without seditions or
 stirres. This fauour amongst others, our
 Lord is pleased to vouchsafe vs heere
 in Religion; and I beseech his diuine
 Maiesty, that it may euer be so. There
 abroad in almost all the Republiques of
 the world, there are contentions and
 competitions either about goods, or v-
 pon points of honour, & there is scar-
 ce a man to be found, who hath any
 emulation concerning vertue. wher-
 as heere through the goodnes & mer-
 cy of God, all the endeauour and care
 of Religious men, is concerning the
 abnegation of a mans selfe, and about
 his increase in vertue and perfection,
 and all his contentions, and pretences
 are, who shall be more vertuous, more
 humble, & more obedient, & all this
 without noyse, diuision, or murmu-
 ring, but with a holy kind of enuy or
 emulation. It is no small fauour and
 benefit, but a very great one, that our
 Lord hath drawn vs hither to Reli-
 giō, where vertue is the thing, which
 is fauoured, and esteemed; and where

138 The 1. Treatise. Chap. XIII.

the learned man and the Preacher, is not valued and accounted of, because he is a great scholler, or an eminent preacher; but because he is a very humble, and a very mortified man. By meanes whereof, euery one here procures to aduantage himselfe in vertue, and animates all the rest by his good example, to go on apace in the way of spirit; and therefore let vs serue our selues of so good an occasion, as heere we haue, to exercise this help and meanes.

3. p. const.

c. 1. §. 4.

Reg.

29. sum-

ma.

From hence we may fetch a second point, namely the obligation which we haue to giue good example to our brethren, to the end, that some observing others, we may all increase in deuotion, & prayse of our Lord God, as our Blessed Father directs vs; or rather indeed Christ our Lord in the Ghospell: *Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, vt videant vestra bona, & glorificent Patrem vestrum, qui in calis est.* Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good workes, may glorify your Father, who is in heauen. All men know, what an efficacious meanes

Math. 5.

16.

meanes good example is, towards the moving of others. A good Religious doth more good in a house by his good example, then as many sermons & spirituall discourses, as we are able to make. For men do better believe, that which they see with their eyes, then that which they heare with their ears; and they find that to be feasible which they perceave to have beene performed by others, and thereby they are greatly animated and moved to do the like. This is that stirring and fluttering the winges of those holy Beastes, which the Prophet *Ezechiel* saw: *Et audiui vocem alarum percutiētium alteram ad alteram*; when by your good example, you stricke the hart of your brother, and move him to compunction, to deuotion, and to desire of perfectiō.

Ezech. 3.
13.

S. Bernard confesses of himselfe, that when he began to be Religious, he tooke so much encouragement, & felt so much ioy by the only seeing of certaine spirituall and edifying Religious men, that his whole soule was fullfilled thereby, with the suauity of deuotion; and his eyes with most delightfull

Bern. ser.
14. *super.*
Cantica.

full teares, yea and sometymes this happened to him, not only by seeing them, but by the meere remembrance of some one of them, whome he had formerly knowne, & then was either absent, or dead. This is that for which the holy Scripture prayes King Iosias

Ecd. 49. 1. in this manner: *Memoria Iosia in compositionem odoris, facta opus pigmentarij.* The

memory of Iosias, sayth he, is like a composition of odours, which comfortes and euen reuiues the spirits. Such must we also procure to be, according to

2. Cor. 2. that of S. Paul: *Christi bonus odor sumus.*

15. We must be like an aromaticall kind of spice, or like some composition of sweet odours which instatly affects the ayre, and comfortes, and giues spirit to all that came neere it. This must be a great motiue to vs, to apply our selues much to vertue, and not to minister the least occasion of disedificatiō to our brethren. For as an exemplar Religious man giues much assistance towards the edifying of a whole house, and drawing them all after him; so an ill Religious man doth much hurt, and is able to disedify a whole Community, and

and to make it worse. Nay it is a most certaine thing, that an ill example is much more efficacious towards the doing of hurt, then a good one is towards the doing of good, by reason of our corrupt inclination, which is nothing so apt to apply it selfe to the good, as to the ill.

God commaunded the Captaines in Deuteronomy, when they went to the warre, that they should make this proclamation ouer the whole Campe:

Deu. 20. 8

Quis est homo formidolosus, & corde pauido, vadat, & reuertatur in domum suam.

Let feareful persons and cowards returne home to their own houses. And let the reason which he giues, be noted; for this is that which maks to our purpose: *Ne pauere faciat corda fratrum suorum, sicut & ipse timore perterritus est.*

Least he makes cowards of the rest by infecting them with his owne cowardize and feare. The ill example of some is that which makes the rest to be tepide, & remisse in Religion. It maks them fainte-harted against endeauouring, and enterprising thinges of perfection; and infects them with lukewarmnesse

Euseb. E-
miss. Hom.
7. ad mo-
na.

warmenesse and remisesse. Which makes S. Eusebius Emisenus deliuer this propositiō: *Qui inter multos vitam agere constituerunt, aut cum grandi fructu, aut cum grandi periculo, vel diligentes vel negligentes sunt.* They who are resolved to liue in a Community, are either diligent to the great good and profit, or negligent to the great hurt and preiudice thereof.

We may heere add another thing, which will serue for a motiue to the same end, & it is, the obligation, wherein we are to giue good example and edification, not only to our brethren, amongst whome we liue and conuerse daily, but euen to the whole world, least otherwise our Order of Religion come to loose the good name, which it enioyes. For we see, that the world is wont by one Religious man, to iudge of the rest. It is as if the fault and sinne of a Religious man, were like the originall sinne of our nature, or like those goods which go in common: and the manner of mens talke is this: *They of the society transgresse, & do this, & that; when they see that any one of this body, for-*
gets

gets himselfe in any kind. So that euery one of vs, is much obliged to see that he giue great edification to the world, that so he may aduance & increase the reputation, & good opinion of the order; and that he be no part of the cause through his imperfections and faultes, that the credit & good fame grow lesse which through the goodnesse of our Lord, it possesses. And as for vs, who are yet but in the beginning of our course, our obligation is yet more precise, because all mens eyes are vpon vs: *Spectaculum facti sumus mundo & Angelis & hominibus.* And though it be most 1. Cor. 4. true, that the world hath no reason at all to impute the fault of one to his whole Order, yet in fine it is most certaine, that the good and progresse of the order, dependes vpon the being of this and that, and the other particular: a good Religious man, and the whole order wil suffer by the contrary, for the body of the Religion is composed of the particuler members thereof. Let euery one of vs therefore keep his station like a good souldier, that so the Squadron, which is so well ordered, may

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squadron, which is so well ordered,
may

may not be broken, and that there enter no relaxation into the Religion. And for this, it will be a good consideration, that euery one make account, that Religion is his Mother, and that she is still speaking those wordes to him, which that holy Mother of the *Machabees* spake to her yongest Sonne, when she animated him thus to suffer & dye for the obseruance of their law:

2. Macha.

7. 17.

Fili mi, miserere mei, quia te in vtero nouem menses portauī, & lac triennio dedi, & alui, & in aetatem istam perduxī. My Sonne, haue pittie on me, for it is I who haue carryed thee in my bowells, not nine moneths, but nine yeares, yea & twenty and thirty, and some more then that; and I haue giuen thee milke three yeares in thy probation, or Nouiceship, and I haue giuen thee breeding in learning and vertue at my charge, & haue brought thee to that condition, wherin now thou art. And that which I beg of thee for all this, is, that thou wilt take pittie of me, and that I may not be a looser by thee, and that thou giue me not a miserable old age. Those weapons, wherewith I haue armed thee

To carry our selues as the first day. 145
thee for the good of thy selfe and many
others, do not turne them against me;
or rather against thy selfe, and let not
that, which ought to be a reason and
meanes, to make thee more thankfull,
more humble, and more mortified, be
an occasion to make thee more secular,
more vnmortified, & more vaine.

That it will help vs much so to carry our
selues still, as we did the first day
when we entred into Religion.

C H A P. X I V.

ONE of those auncient Monkes
asked this opinion of the Ab-
bot Agathon, how he should do well, to
carry himselfe in Religion, & he made
him this answere: *Vide, qualis fueris pri-* Abbot A-
gathon.
mo die, quando existi de saeculo, & receptus
fuiſti in clauſtro, & talis permane ſemper.
Conſider what kind of man you were
the first day, when you forſooke the
world, and entred into Religion, and
be you still after the ſame manner. If
you alſo will know, how to be a good
Religious man, and how you muſt car-

*Dionys.
Cartus.
in scala
Religios.*

ry your selfe, that you may profit much in vertue and Perfection, this is a very good meanes or help: Consider what kind of man you were the first day, when you forsooke the world, & were receaued to be Religious, and so you must euer do. Cōsider with how great seruour, and fortitude, you gaue ouer the world, & whatsoeuer you had in it, parents, friends, acquaintance, riches, houses, regaloes, and entertainments; and continue still in the same contempt of the world, and in the same forgetfulness of all worldly things, and in the same flight from all the commodities of this life, and thus will you proue a good Religious man. Consider also, with how great humility & instance, you begged to be admitted to Religion, and how the day, when that suite was granted, you thought the gates of heauen were set open to you, and how gratefull you were, & how much you found your selfe obliged to serue God and the Order, for so great a benefit & fauours and now continue with the same gratitude, and humble acknowledgment of your being as great a deb-
tour

To carry our selues, as the first day. 147
tour now, as you were vpon the day of
your first entrance, and thus will you
profit much in Religion. Consider al-
so, how after you were admitted, with
how great modesty & deuotion, with
how great obedience and humility,
with how great promptitude, indiffe-
rence & resignation, you carryed your
selfe in those beginnings; and continue
to be still the same, and so you will in-
crease and profit much in vertue, and
perfection.

This help or meanes, is recomme-
ded to vs greatly by the Saints, as we
shall quickly see; but yet we must be
sure to vnderstand it right. I say not,
but that you must haue a greater stocke
of vertue now, then you had the first
day you entred into Religion; nor that
the ancient Father needes to haue no
more vertue then the Nouice, for the
contrary of this, is very euident, & that
the man of a longer standing must be
more vertuous, then he who began
but yesterday, as it is in the case of sci-
ence; he who hath studyed longer,
must know more, then the new begin-
ner. For Religion is a schoole of vertue

and perfection, & so he who hath byn longer at schoole, must know more. But now, as when one, who began to study with much seruour, and with great impulse, is growne lazy & weary we are wont to aduise him, to returne to his former diligence and care, and that so he may grow to be learned; so the thing, which heere we say, is that you must returne to that first impulse, wherein you began the way of vertue, when first you entred into Religion. Consider, with what liberty of mind, and with what a forcible kind of affection, you then beganne to serue God, when nothing could stand in your way, nor seeme to carry any difficulty with it; and so go on still with that earnest deuotion, with that spirit & life, and so you will profit much in Religion; and this is that, which the Saints meant to signify to vs by this aduise.

*Antonius
Abbas.*

The Blessed *S. Antony*, when his disciples prayed him to giue them some aduise for their spirituall good, tooke the beginning of his discourse from hence, and is related by *S. Athanasius* in

To carry our selues, as the first day. 149

in the Saints life. *Hoc fit primum cunctis Athan. & in commune mandatum, nullum in arripit Surinus to. propositi vigore lassescere, sed quasi incipien-* 1. p. 386.
tem debere semper augere, quod coeperit.

And besides that he repeated the same to them many seuerall times, yet when he drew neere to his death he gaue the agayne the same charge in most tender wordes; and indeed as from the mouth of a Father, by way as it were of a last will and testament, that so it might remaine the more deeply imprinted in their mind: *Ego quidem, filioli, secundum eloquia scripturatum, Patrum gradior viam: iam enim Dominus me inuitat, iam cupio videre caelestia; sed vos, O viscera mea, admoneo, ne tanti temporis laborem repente perdati: hodie vos Religiosum statum arripuisse arbitramini, & coepta voluntatis fortitudo succrescat.* Yf you will profit in vertue and perfection, carry this rule always before your eyes, make account that every day you beginne a freeth, and behaue your selues still as you did the day, when you first began. *S. Augustino* also speakes of this meanes. *Obliuiscere ergo omne prateritum, & quotidie inchoare te puta.* Forget all that which you haue

Aug. epist. 143. ad Democ. Virgmem.

150 The I. Treatise. Chap. XIV.
done hitherto, and thinke that still you
are but beginning.

Antonius. S. Antony declared this, by this fa-
miliar example. As heere the Dome-
stikes and seruants of great Lords what
paines soeuer they haue taken, & how
faithfully soeuer they haue serued, faile
not yet to performe whatsoeuer is new-
ly presented to them, and are euer as
well disposed to do whatsoeuer is com-
maunded, as they were the first day,
when they began to serue, and as if till
then they had taken no paines, & done
no seruice at all: so are we to serue our
God, our Creatour and our Lord. Of
this we haue also a good example, in
the person of S. Bernard. *Surius* relates
in his life, that he held others for Saints
and perfect men; and that, as persons
who were much aduanced in vertue,
they might wel be dispensed withal in
certaine thinges (which by the way is
a good rule, to keep men from iudging
others, whensoever they see any thing
of this kind) but yet for his owne part,
that he held himselfe to be a meere be-
ginner, and but a Nouice, and that such
exemptions were not fit for him; and
by

Bernard.
Surius l. 1.
c. 4. vite
sue.

To carry our selues, as the first day 151
by this meanes, he lost not a haire
breadth of the rigour of his Rule, nor
of the ordinary imployments, or hum-
ble exercises thereof. In all thinges
commaunded by Obedience, he was
euer the first, he the first to lay hold v-
pon the broome or mappe, nor would
he exempt himselfe from any thing, or
be dispensed with, in any thing from
the rest, yea rather, when others were
imployed about such handy worke, as
he had not the skill to performe, he pro-
cured at the same tyme, to recompence
it in vndertaking some more humble
and low action, then that other was,
that so he might not loose the occasion;
and he would eyther be taking some
spade into his hand, and dig, or some
hatchet, and cleaue wood, and so carry
it vpon his backe, to the kitchen. And
he tooke much gust, to bestow himselfe
vpon such exercises as these, and con-
ceaued, that all was little enough, for
the securing of his profit in the way of
spirit. He did not in this, like some,
who when they performe the like, are
wont to say, that they do it for the ex-
ample of others, but that they conceaue
them-

themselves not to haue need thereof,
or that it doth them any great good.
You do well indeed in performing
these things for the example and edifi-
cation of others; but yet you would do
better, if you believed, that you haue
need thereof for your selues, since *Saint*
Bernard conceaued that he had need.

Antonius
Abbas.

S. Antony addes another very good
particuler, wherby the former is decla-
red. The Saint is not content, that we
should returne to those first seruours,
wherewith we beganne; but requires,
that we still go forward, by adding &
increasing them more and more. *Sed*
quasi incipientem debere semper augere, quod
caperit. As one, who euen now be-
ginnes to serue Almighty God, so pro-
cure you to go dayly increasing and
multiplying your seruices, considering
that till then all had beene offences and
sinnes, so to recompence what is past,
& make your selfe worthy of reward.
And so must we also euer do, like men,
who hitherto had made no increase of
our stocke, but rather scattered, & mis-
spent our goods.

Greg. lib.
22. moral.
cap. 4.

S. Gregory sayth, that this meanes
agrees

To carry out selues, as the first day . 153
 agrees well to all, how perfect soeuer
 they may be; for the Prophet David
 was perfect, and yet he spake as if he *Psal. 76.*
 had but then begun : *Et dixi, nunc cœpi.* 11.
 I sayd, that I beginne but now . For
 he proceeded with so great diligence,
 and seruour in the seruice of our Lord,
 in the very extremity of his old age, as
 if he had but then begunne . Nay this
 doctrine is very proper for perfect mē,
 according to that of the Wiseman: *Cum*
consumauerit homo , tunc incipiet . *Ecd. 18 :*
 The true seruants of God , how much the 6.
 further they goe , and how much the
 neerer they come to their iourneyes
 end, and to the very point of perfecti-
 on, so much the more carefull and ser-
 uorous they are; *Quasi effedientes the-*
saurum, as Iob sayth, like men who are *Iob. 3. 21.*
 working into a mine of treasure. Wher
 upon S. Gregory sayth, that as they who
 are digging for treasure , how much *Greg. l. 3.*
 the further they haue digged, and how *moral. c. 3*
 much the deeper they haue gone, with
 so much the more diligence doe they
 labour, as conceauing that now they
 are growen neere to the hidden trea-
 sure which they seeke, and that they

cannot want much of meeting with it, and therefore they are animated to labour with more force, and they worke with more contentment and gust; so they, who take their spirituall profit and perfection to hart, how much the further they goe, and how much neerer to the end they draw, so much the more hast they make. Courage, courage, loose no time; the treasure is now neere at hand; you cannot want much of meeting with it: *Et tanto magis quanto videritis appropinquantem diem*, sayth the Apostle. As if he had told vs, according to the discourse of S. Gregory, that our labour must be so much the greater, as our recompence & reward was the nearer. When a stone moues downward, how much the neerer it gets to the Center, with so much the more actiuity and speed it fellos, till it arriue at last; and so the more a man profits in vertue and perfection, and growes to make his approaches neerer to Almighty God, who is his center and last end; so much the more hast he makes, that so he may arriue, where he would be. These, as S. Basil sayth,

Ad Hebr.
10. 25,

That it will help a man much, to aske himselfe often this question: To what end didst thou come to Religion?

C H A P. XV.

TH E R E is also another meanes, which wil help vs much towards increase in vertue, and for the obtayning of perfectiō. And it is that which S. Bernard vsed, as Surius relates in his life: *Hoc semper in corde, frequenter etiam in ore habebat: Bernarde, Bernarde, ad quid venisti?* He had euer this thought in his mind, and often this speach in his mouth: O Bernard, to what end camest thou into Religion? We read also this of the Holy Abbot *Arsenius*, who was wont to aske himselfe the same question: *Arseni, Arseni, ad quid venisti?* And he often entred thus into account with himselfe: *Arsenius, why diddest thou leaue the world?* What was thy end and intention in forsaking it, and retyring thy selfe thus to Religion? Canst thou say perhaps, that it was not, that thou mightest be intirely pleasing

Sur. lib. 1.
cap. 4. vis.
S. Berna.

pleasing to Almighty God, and that thou mightest not care for contenting men, or to be valued, or esteemed by them? Sticke therefore close to this resolution, & make no account of reputation, with the world; for this is that world, which thou forsookest, & therefore let not thy hart returne to it againe; for it will do thee little good to haue brought thy body to Religion, if thou haue left thy hart in the world, desiring the applause and renowne of men. By such discourse as this, the Saints did much animate and awake themselves, and by the same considerations must we also stirre vp and encourage our mindes to go cheerefully on, and to maister al those difficulties, which may oppose themselves to vs in Religion. When you shall find any difficulty in performing what you are enioyned by Obedience, rowse your selfe vp with these wordes: For what end didst thou come to Religion? Was it perhaps, to worke thyne owne wil? Without doubt it was not, but to doe the will of others. And why then wilt thou pretend to do thyne owne? Whe

you shall feele any effect of Pouerty, you must animate your selfe also with this discourse. Did you peradventure come to Religion, for the seeking of your owne conueniency and ease, and to possesse all that your hart could thinke, and that nothing might euer be wanting to you? Do you not reme-ber, that you came hither with designe to be poore? And to suffer any kind of necessity, like one, who was to be poore indeed? And of what then doe you complaine? When you conceaue that men make no account of you, encourage and comfort your selfe with this. Was perhaps your end in coming to Religion that you might be valued and esteemed? No certainly: but to be forgotten, and layd aside by men, and that you might make no account at all, of the opinion and estimation of the world. And why then do you refuse that, which you came to seeke? And why will you returne to that, which you forsooke? This indeed is to be Religious, not to worke a mans owne will, to be poore, to endure necessity, to desire to be forgotten, and

Why art thou entred into Religion. 159
not to be accounted of by men. This
indeed is to be dead to the world, and
to liue to God.

Now for this came we all to Religion, and it will do vs little good to remaine therein, if we performe not those thinges, for which we came. For places are not able to make Saints, but Saints are made by leading religious, and perfect liues. S. *Augustine* declares this very well in a sermon which he made to his Religious, who remayned in the desert: *Ecce in solitudine sumus, in eremo sumus, locus tamen non facit Sanctos, sed operatio bona sanctificabit locū & nos.* You see my brethren, that we are heere in the desert, we haue already left the world, and we are retyred to Religion: but the place will not make the inhabitants holy, but our good workes, and our religious life must be that which will make holy both it and vs. *Peccauit enim Angelus in cælo: peccauit Adam in paradiso; & tamen nullus locus sanctior illis erat. Alas! How* holy soeuer the place may be, and how close soeuer you may be shut vp in Religion; yet there you may be able to sinne, and there you may

*Aug. serm.
27. ad frat.
in eremo.*

may deserue to be damned, sayth the Blessed S. *Augustine*. Put not too much trust in that; for the *Angell* sinned in *heauen*, and *Adam* sinned in *Paradise*, and no place can be holier then they were. *Si enim habitatorem loca beare possent, nec homo, nec Angelus à dignitate corrumpentur*. If the sanctity of persons could haue depended vpon the dignity of places, neither had the *Angell* fallen from *heauen*, nor *Adam* beene expelled out of *Paradise*. You may not thertore think, that your businesse is therefore dispatched, and that the field is already your owne, because you are able to say: *I am a Religious man: I am of the Society of Iesus*; for this will not serue your turne, vnlesse withal you perform those things for which you came to Religion. And let me tell you againe and againe, that your end of comming hither, was not to be a good student, nor to be a great scholler, nor to be an eminent Preacher, but to be a good Religious man, and to procure perfection. Alas! It importes very little, whether any of you prove learned, more or lesse, or whether you grow to be a great or but a meane

Why art thou entred into Religion. 161

a meane Preacher; but it importes very much, and indeed nothing els importes, but that you be a good and perfect Religious, what do we then heer if we do not this? And what haue we done hitherto, if we haue neglected this? And to what we haue attended, if we haue not attended to this consideration. *For what came we hither? Anice ad quid venisti?* My friend, my brother, for what camest thou hither? Enter into account with your selues, and aske your selues this question very often: Alas, O my God, in what employmēt could I haue passed all that tyme, wherein I haue beene of the Society, but that I should haue proued therein? If I had put my selfe to a Painter, by this tyme I should haue beene able to paint; if to an Embroderer, I might haue beene able to haue serued my selfe of the skill: but I applyed my self to be a good Religious man, & I haue not obtrayned what I sought. So many yeares are now past, since I go continually to the schoole of vertue, & yet I haue scarce learnt the first letter of that Christs-Crosse-row, and scarce

L

obtrayned

obtainned the very first degree of humility. In seauen years study you procure a good Philosopher, & a good Deuine; and I in so many years haue not proued a good Religious man. O that we sought and procured with so great care & diligēce to possesse true vertue, as we seeke & procure to be learned.

Bernard.
deuari-
or, Doro.
cap. 21. &
l. de Consc.
cap. 2.

S. Bernard sayth: *Multi quarunt scientiam, pauci verò conscientiam; si verò tāto studio & solitudine quæretetur conscientia, quanto quæritur secularis & vana scientia, & citius apprehenderetur, & vtilius retineretur.* Many go in search of science; but few of Conscience; But if men would procure to carry a good conscience with so much sollicitude and care, as they employ vpon the getting of vaine science, it would both more easily be obtained, & more profitably kept. And yet, me thinkes it should be no vnreasonable demand, that we would employ as much care, and diligence vpon our owne spirituall good, as vpon the purchase of learning. S. Dorotheus sayth, that he helped himself much of this following consideratiō. When I applyed my self
to

Dorothe.
doctr. 10.

Why art thou entred into Religion. 163
to my studyes there in the world, I
was so possessed therewith, that I scarce
considered my selfe, nor did I think
of any other thing, nor did I remem-
ber, that I was to eate, and much lesse
could I find tyme to ordaine what that
should be; so that if it had not beene
for a cōpanion, a deere friend of myne
who tooke care of my dyet, and of
calling me to it, I should often haue
forgotten my selfe. Yea and the fer-
uorous appetite, which I had to study,
and my desire of science was so great,
that whilest I was eating, my booke
was still open before me: so that I did
eate & study both at once. And coming
to the afternoones lecture, I caused my
light to be brought, and I studyed till
midnight; and when I went to rest, I
carried my booke with me to bed; &
when I had slept a while, I would in-
stantly be returning to read: & in fine
I was so transported with my study,
that I could take no kind of gust but in
that. When afterwarde I came to Re-
ligion, I put my selfe many tymes to
thinke of what had passed, and then I
sayd thus to my selfe selfe: *Si tantus la-*

bor, tantusq; feruor fuit tibi in anipiscenda eloquentia, quanto maior tibi nunc adhibenda est cura, vt veras virtutes acquirere valeas. If for the acquiring of eloquence, and humane letters thou couldst employ so much paines, and couldst thew so much heat and feruour, how much more reason is it, that thou shouldst do it now in Religion, for the acquyring of true vertue and true wisdom, especially since thou camest hither for no other end. And he sayth, that he animated himselfe very much, and got no small hart by this meanes: *Et hac re, non modicas vires accepi.*

It will therefore be also reason, that we animate and rowse our selues by this meanes; for it importes vs a little more to be good Religious men, then either to be diligent students, or good schollers. And therefore all our care & sollicitude must be employed vpo acquiring this diuine wisdom; & this is to be our whole ayme. The sonne of God had no other businesse heere on earth, but to attend to the loue of vs, and to seeke our profit, and our greater good, and that with his owne so great

VVhy art thou entred into Religion. 165
 great cost; and therefore it will be no
 strange or vnreasonable thing, that we
 should take our selues to haue no other
 businesse heere, but only to attend to
 loue and please his diuine Maiesty, &
 to procure his greater glory more and
 more: *Propter quod, remissas manus, & soluta genua erigit.* And therefore, sayth
 the Apostle, let vs quit all lukewarm-
 nesse, and remissenesse; and let vs cast
 away all impediments & make haste:
Festinemus ingredi in illam requiem. Let
 vs walke on apace to clime vp the hill
 of perfection, and of glory, *Vsque ad montem Dei Hareb.*

Ad Hebr.
 12. 12.

Ad Hebr.
 1. 41.
 3. Reg. 19.
 8. Bon. 10.
 2. Opusc.
 lib. 2. de
 profectu
 Relig. cap.
 1.

And as the trauellet, who hath o-
 uerslept himselfe some morning, will
 be sure to vse more diligēce afterward,
 that so he may recouer the tyme he lost
 and will make extraordinary hast to o-
 uertake his cōpany, which is gone be-
 fore, so are we also to hasten our selues,
 and to runne hard for recouering the
 time, we haue lost. Alas! my com-
 panions and my Brothers are slipt be-
 fore, and I only am left heere behind,
 and yet I began my iourney before the,
 because I entred before them into Re-

ligion. O that the time, which we haue lost hitherto, did afflict and trouble vs so much that it might serue vs for spurres, to make vs runne on heereafter with more seruour.

Dionys.
Carthus.
ar. 30. de
Quai nor
Nouß. &
in uitis
Patrum.
p. 2. f.
203.

Dionysius Carthusianus brings that example, which is recounted in the Liues of the auncient Fathers, of a certaine yong man, who resolving to enter into Religion, his Mother endeauoured to hinder the accomplishment of his good desires; and to that purpose she brought many reasons. He in the meane time would by no meanes condescend to her, nor forsake his good purposes, but was euer defending himselfe with this buckler: *Saluare volo animam meam*: I am resolved to saue my soule: I am resolved to secure my saluation, which is the thing that importes me, and thus he made answer to the troublesome & importunate demaund of his Mother. And, in fine, when she perceaued that she lost her labour, and perswasions and importunities could not preuaile, she gaue ouer, and let him do what he listed, and so he entred into Religion. But ere longe he beganne
to

VVhy art thou entred into Religion. 167
to be remisse, and to liue therein after
a negligent & carelesse manner. With-
in a short time after this, his mother dy-
ed; and himselfe fell into a very grie-
uous sickenesse, in the processe wher-
of, he was taken one day with a strange
accident, which drew him out of him-
selfe, and so being rapt in spirit, he was
carried & presented before the iudge-
ment-seate of God, where he found
at the foote of that diuine Tribunall,
his Mother, togeather with many o-
thers, who with her, expected the sen-
tence of their damnation. The Mother
turned her eyes aside, and finding that
her Sonne was amongst those soules,
which were to be damned, she was,
mightily amazed thereat, & sayd? What
do I see, O my sonne? Art thou come to
such an end as this? Where are those
wordes, which thou wert wont to vt-
ter: *I am resolved to saue my Sou'e?* Didst
thou enter for this, into Religion? But
he, in the meane tyme, remayned
so full of confusion and shame, as that he
had not one word to answer. The man
returned to himselfe, & our Lord was
pleased, that he should recouer of that
sicke-

sickenesse, and he, falling vpon the true account, and considering, that this had beene an admonition to him from heauen, gaue such a quicke & lively turne, that now his whole life was nothing else, but to lament his former negligence, and to do penance for it, in so much as he was wished by many, to remit and moderate that rigour of his, least otherwise he might ouerthrow his health. But he, reiecting that counsell of theirs, made this answer: No, if I were not able to endure that reproach of my Mother, how shall I be able to endure the reproach of Christ our Lord, and of all his holy Angels, at the day of Iudgement?

Of certaine other thinges, which will be able to help vs much, towards our spirituall profit, and for the obtayning of Perfection.

C H A P. XVI.

Math. 5.
48.

E Stote perfecti, sicut & Pater vester celestis perfectus est, sayth Christ our Lord, in that soueraigne sermon of his, which

which he made vpon the moun. Be perfect, as your heauenly Father is perfect.

Saint Cyprian vpon these words, sayth thus: *Si hominibus letum est & gloriosum*

filios habere consimiles, & tunc magis gen-

rasse delectat, si ad Patrem lineamentis pari-

bis soboles successiue respondeat; quanto magis

Deo Patre letitia est, cum quis sic spirituali-

liter nascitur, ut actibus eius & laudibus, di-

uina generositas pradicetur? Yf it be a very

pleasing and ioyfull thing, for men, to

find that their children are like them-

selues, and resemble them in their fea-

tures & in their ayre, and in fine, when

they be wholly like them, how much

more, will our heauenly Father be

well contented and ioyed, when he

shall see that his spirituall children re-

semble him? Quia iustitia palma, qua

corona est, esse te talem, de quo Deus non di-

cat: Filios enutriti & exaltaui, ipsi autem

spreuerunt me? What victory, what re-

ward, what crowne, what glory do

you thinke it will be, for you to prone

such in the sight of God, as that he may

not complaine of you, as he did of his

people by the mouth of Isay, in such

words as these: I haue cherished and exal-

Cyprian.
ser. 2. de
zelo & li-
uore.

Isa. 1. 2.

sed certaine children, who haue thought fit to despise me for my labour. To auoyd such a reproach as this, be you such, as that your works may redound to the great honour & glory of your heavenly Father. For it is a great glory to God, that he haue children like himselfe, & that by their occasion, he may be knowne, and honoured, and glorified by the whole world.

But how then shall we be able to resemble this Father of ours, who is in heaven? S. Augustin telles vs how: Co-

Aug. epist. 85. ad Consentium. gitemus nos tanto similiores Deo, quanto esse poterimus eius participatione iustiores. So much the more like God shall we be, by how much the more we shall participate of his sanctity, and iustice. And for this doth our Lord desire so much,

1. *Ad Thef. 4. 3.* that we may be holy and perfect, and he remembers vs thereof, and repeates
Math. 5. 48. it to vs very often. Sometimes by Saint Paul: *Hac est enim voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra.* At other times by S. Mathew: *Estote ergo vos perfecti, sicut & Pater vester caelestis perfectus est.* At other times by the
1. Petr. 1. 16. Apostle S. Peter: *Sancti eritis quoniam ego sanctus sum:* Be perfect as your heavenly
Leuitic. 11. 44.
cap. 19. 2.

ly

To carry our selues, as the first day. 171
ly Father is perfect. Be holy, because I
who am your Lord, and your God, am
holy. This is the will and desire of our
heavenly Father. It is a great content-
ment to Fathers, to haue good & wise,
and holy children. *Filius sapiens letificat
patrem.* Such a Sonne as this, sayth Salo-
mon, is the very ioy of his Fathers hart, as
on the other side, a foolish and wicked Sonne,
is an affliction and Croſſe to him. *Filius vero
stultus, mestitia est matris sua.* So that
euen for this reason, although there
were no other then this of giuing gust
to God, we should apply our selues
wholy to the procuring of vertue and
perfection, because this, of the content-
ment and greater honour and glory of
Almighty God, is euer to be the prin-
cipall scope, and ayme of all our acti-
ons.

But yet besides this, we will speake
of some other meanes, which may ani-
mate and help vs much, towards this
end. *S. Augustine* sayth, that the cause
why holy Scripture calles vs so often
the Sonnes of God, saying: I will be
your Father, & you shall be my Sonns
(which is so often repeated by the Pro-
phets,

Prov. 10.
1.

Aug. in E-
pist. 243.
cap. 12.

Ad Ephes. phets, as also by the Apostle S. Paul:

9. 1. *Estote imitatores Dei, sicut filij charissimi:*

1. *Ioan.* 3. And by the Apostle also and Euange-
1. list S. Iohn: *Videte qualem charitatem de-*

dit nobis pater, ut filij Dei nominemur & simus, as also in many other places) that the cause, I say, of repeating this so often, is to the end, that we seeing and considering our owne dignity and excellency, may esteeme and preserve our selues with so much the more diligence and care. A rich garment is kept with much respect, and men are very curious that it may receaue no spot or stayne. Precious stones, and rich moueables and Jewells, are carefully layd vp. To the end therefore that we may keep our selues with great circumspection and care, and to make vs choice and curious of our selues, S. Augustine sayth, that the holy Scripture doth oftē represent to vs, that we must consider our selues to be the Sonnes of God, and that no lesse then God himselfe is our Father, to the end, that we may so resolve to carry our selues like such a Fathers Sonnes, & that we may not giue our high condition the lye, by
doing

doing vnworthy thinges, nor degenerate from such heroicall, and high thoughts, as may become the Sonnes of God. *Saint Leo* the Pope concurre also well with this, when he sayth: *Agnosce,*

O Christiane, dignitatem tuam, & divina *S. Leo Pa.*
consors factus natura, noli in veterem vilitatem, de generi conuersatione redire; memento cuius capitis & cuius corporis sis membrum. *serm. 1. de*
Natiuit.
Domini.

Acknowledge and consider your own dignity: Remember, that you are the Sonnes of God, and be very sure to do nothing, which may misbecome the dignity, and generosity of such as are children of that Father. And *S. Paul*, in the Acts of the Apostles, represented this to the Athenians, whereby to animate and raise their thoughts to high things; *Ipsius enim & Genas sumus.* And afterward: *Genus ergo cum simus Dei:* But now (to apply this more particularly to our selues, together with that of the garment, which *Saint Augustine* brings) as any spot shewes very ill fauouredly vpon a rich garment, and how much the more rich the garment is, so much more ill-fauouredly doth the spot shew (for in cloath of gold, or
tissue.

AR. 17.
18.

tillue, it appeares to the eye with great offence, whereas if it be but in a poore Country coate, it is not much considered, or rather indeed it is scarcely seene) so amongst them, who liue in the world, the spot of a veniall sinne will be hardly seene, yea nor sometimes euen of a mortall, nor is much account made thereof, (so great is misery of the times,) but in the soules of Religious men, who are the children, and the fauorits, and the persons who be regaled by Almighty God, euery little imperfection and spot, shewes it selfe in fresh colours, and finds means, to make it selfe be instantly obserued. Any little immodesty, any light murmuratiō, any one impatient and cholericke word, offends and disedifies greatly heere: whereas amongst seculars, too little account is made thereof. Yf the feet be dusty, it is not greatly considerable, but if dust get into the eyes, yea and into the very apples and middle point thereof, it is considerable with a witnesse. Secular and worldly men, are as the feet of this body of the Church, but Religious men are as the eyes,

eyes, and euen as the apples of the eyes, and therefore any light fault in a Religious man is of much importance, because it vnguildes and causes great deformity in the body, and therefore we haue the more obligation to be very carefull.

There is yet another particuler, *Cap. 7.* which will profit vs much, and make vs still go forwards, and we partly touched it before. Namely, that we must know and belieue that we haue a great way yet to go, and that we haue acquired and obtrayned little hitherto. This consideration is also partly touched by the words aboue mentioned of Christ our Lord: Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. But can we euer perhaps arriue to the perfection of our heavenly Father? *Nunquid homo, Dei Iob. 4. 17. comparatione, iustificabitur?* sayth Iob. Certainly this cannot be, nor can it approach to that, by infinite degrees. For how farre soeuer we aduāce our selues, there will euer be an infinite distance betweene him and vs. But yet he tells vs: *That we must be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect.* To the end we may vnder-

vnderstand, that in this triite towards
 vertue, there will be way enough to
 go, and that so we must neuer be sa-
 tisfied, with whatsoeuer we may haue
 done already, but labour for that
 which remaines. The Saints do vsual-
 ly affirme, that there is not a more cer-
 taine signe of a mans being farre from
 perfection, then if he thinke, that he
 hath already obtained it. For in this
 way of spirit, how much further a man
 goes, so much the large prospect of
 Country he discouers. It vsually hap-
 pens to vs heere, that when we see a
 high hill from farre off, it seemes to vs,
 as if it touched heauen, and that from
 thence we might be able to reach it
 with one of our hands, but when after-
 ward we grow neere, and beginne to
 mount it, we find that it falles very
 short of heauen. So is it in the way of
 Perfection, and in the knowledge and
 loue of Almighty God. *Accedet homo ad
 cor altum, & ex itabitur Deus.* Thus doth
 S. Cyprian declare this place: That how
 much soeuer we may rise in the know-
 ledge of Almighty God, yet God is
 still higher then we. How much soe-

Bonauent.
serm. 2. O-
pusc. lib. 2.
de profectu
Relig. cap.
21.

Psal. 61. 3.
Cyprian.
de operi.
Christi, ad
Cornel.
Pa. in
Prelogo.

uer he know of God, there is yet much more to know; and how much soeuer we loue him, there is much more in him to be loued. There is euer roome for a man to go still further in the way of perfection; and he who thinkes that he hath already arriued there, is very farre off, as if he would conceaue, that he could reach Heauen it selfe with his hand.

This may be the more easily vnderstood by that which we see heere, concerning humane science; where, how much the more a man knowes, so much the better doth he vnderstand what he is ignorant of. So sayd that other Philosopher: *Hoc vnum scio, me nihil scire.* And that other great Maister of musicke, grew very melancholy & sayd, that he seemed to himselfe to see such a deale of Countrey, of knowledge in his art so large and wide, that he should neuer be able to arriue thither, to comprehend it. They who know little, by not vnderstanding what they are ignorant of, nor how much there remaines yet to be knowne, conceaue themselves to know wonders, so is it

-niged M also

*Socrat. ref.
Laertius
in eius vi-
ta.*

also in the case of diuine wisdom. The seruants of God, who haue studied it hard, and profited much therein, know well how farre they fall short from arriving to perfection. And this is the reason, why the more a man profits, the more humble he is. First, because as he gets increase in the other vertues, so doth he also in that of humility, and in a greater knowledge & contempt of himselfe; for these things are wont to go hand in hand. And secondly, because he knowes more exactly what he wantes; for the more knowledge & light he hath of the benignity & maiesty of Almighty God, the more profound knowledge he will consequently haue of his owne misery and indeed of his nothing. For *Abyssus abyssum inuocat*. That abyss of the knowledge of the goodnesse & greatness of God, discloses that other abyss of the profundity of our misery. It makes vs discern euevery atome, and those innumerable graines of the dust of our imperfections, & the huge vaste distance, wherein we are from arriving to perfection. The Nouice and first
 ohs M begin-

Psalms. 41.
8.

beginner conceaues sometymes, that already he hath acquired a vertue, whē indeed he thinkes so, but because he knowes not well, how much it wants thereof. It happens sometymes, that when a man who hath no skill, sees a picture, he likes it very well, and finds not any fault therein; but then comes a maister and considers it, and he sees not the picture for the faults. So is it heere in our case, you are ignorant of the art of the knowledge of a mans selfe, and therefore it is that you discern not the faultes, which are in the image of your owne soule: but the other who hath learned eyes, see them at great ease. We must help our selues by this, for the increase of our desire of obtaining that which we want, and to add to our care and diligence therein:

Beati qui esuriunt & sitiunt iustitiam. 8. Math. 5.
Hierome declares it thus, Blessed are 6.
 they who how iust soeuer they be, *Hieron.*
 are neuer fully satisfied, nor thinke themselves to haue inough, but do euer hunger and thirst after more vertue & perfection. As the Prophet *Dauid* did when he sayd, and begged of

180 The I. Treatise. Chap. XVII.
 Psal. 50. our Lord: *amplius laua me ab iniquitate*
 4. & 9. *mea, & à peccato meo munda me.* Wash
 me, O Lord, yet more and more, I am
 not content with being once washed
 and cleansed from my sinnes. My soule
 is not satisfyed with being white after
 an ordinary manner, but I would haue
 thee make me, as white as snow, yea
 and euen more white then snow: *As-*
perges me, Domine, hyssopo & mundabor;
lauabis me, & super niuem dealbabor. Do
 not only besprinkle me exteriorly,
 but wash me, O Lord, very wel. Now
 thus must we also call and utter these
 lowd cryes to God: O Lord, graunt
 me more humility, more patience,
 more charity, more mortificatiō, more
 indifferency, and resignation. *Amplius*
laua me.

Of the perseuerance, which we must haue in
 the practise of vertue; and of that which
 will help vs to haue it.

CHAP. XVII.

THE Blessed S. Augustine, vpon
 those words of the Apostle, *Non*
coronabitur

coronabitur, nisi quis legitime certauerit.

No man shalbe crowned, but he who fights as he ought, sayth; that to fight as a man ought, is to do it with perseuerance, euen to the very end; & that he is the man, who will deserue a crowne: And then he brings in this saying, which is also of S. Hierome, & indeed of all the Saints: *Cepisse multorum est, ad culmen peruenisse paucorum.* To beginne to walke in the way of vertue and perfection, is the worke of many, but to perseuer in it to the end, of few. As we see in that which happened to the children of Israell, who went out of Egypt in huge multitudes. For the holy Scripture sayth, that they were six hundred thousand men, besides women and children; and yet of them all, there entred but only two, into the land of promise: *Non est igitur magnus inchoare, quod bonum est, sed consummare, hoc solum perfectum est.* So that it is no great matter to begin a good worke, nor doth the knot of the difficulty consist in that, but in perseuering, and in the finishing thereof. S. Ephrem sayth, that as it is not the greatest trou-

Aug. serm. 8. ad Frat. in eremo. 2. Tim. 2. 5.

Hier. l. 1. contr. Iouinian. & epist. ad Luci. hisp.

Num. 1. 46. & cap. 14. 30.

Aug. ser. 8. ad Frat. in eremo.

S. Ephrem exhort. ad pret.

ble of a builder to lay the foundation;
 but to finish the worke, and so much
 the greater will both the charge and
 trouble be, as it is to be raysed to a
 greater height; and so also in the spiri-
 tuall building, the difficulty consists
 not in the beginning, but in the perfe-
 cting of the worke; and so also it will
 profit vs little to haue begunne it, vn-
 lesse withall we make an end thereof:
*Non quaruntur in Christianis initia, sed fi-
 nis.* S. Hierome sayth: *Paulus male cœ-
 pit, sed bene finiuit. Iuda laudantur exor-
 dia, sed finis proditiōe damnatur.* We must
 not esteeme the beginniges, but the
 endes of thinges; S. Paul began ill,
 but ended well; & Iudas began well
 but ended ill. What was he the better
 for hauing beene a disciple & Apostle
 of Christ our Lord? What was he the
 better for hauing wrought miracles?
 And so what will you be the better,
 for hauing begunne well, if you end
 ill? The reward of a Crowne is not
 promised to them who beginne, but
 who perseuere: *Qui perseuerauerit vs-
 que in finem, hic saluus erit.* Iacob saw,
 that our Lord was seated at the end of
 the

Hier. epist
 ad Euziam
 viduam.

Math. 24
 13.

the ladder, and not in the beginning,
no nor in the midst thereof; to make
vs know (as S. Hierome sayth) that it is
not inough to beginne well, nor to go
well halfe the way, vnlesse withall
we perseuer, & accomplish the worke. *Hier. ubi*
And S. Bernard sayth: *Quid prodest Chri-*
stum sequi, si non contingat consequi. Ideo
Paulus aiebat: sic currite vt comprehenda-
tis. Ibi tu, Christiane, fige cursus tui, pro-
fectusq; metam, vbi Christus posuit suam.
Factus est, inquit, obediens vsque ad mor-
tem. Quantumlibet ergo cucurreris, si vs-
que ad mortem non perueneris, brauium non
apprehendes. Put a good full point vpo
your iourney, and perseuer till you
cometo that which Christ our Lord
made, to the end of the race, of whom
S. Paul sayth, That he was obedient,
euen to the death. For in fine, how
fast, and how farre soeuer you runne,
vnlesse you runne til you dye, you wil
not be crowned.

Christ our Lord did fully aduertise
vs hereof in his holy Ghospel, by these *Luc. 9 62*
wordes: *Nemo mittens manum suam ad*
aratrum, & respiciens retrò, aptus est Re-
gno Dei. He who puts hand to plough,

and lookes backe, is no fit man for the Kingdome of God. Remember, sayth he, Lots wife: *Memores esto uxoris Lot*. And what was that, which Lots wife did? God had deliuered, and drawen her out of Sodome, and she being vpon the way from thence, looked backe, and where she looked, she stayed; for she was turned into a pillar of salt. But now, what should be the meaning of this? Will you know what?

Aug. Psal. 75. super illud, Vultis et reddite, S. Augustine sayth, That salt is a seasoner and preseruer of thinges, and that therefore Christ our Lord, commaunded vs to remember Lots wife, to the end, that considering that which happened to her, we might be preserved the better by meanes of that salt, and taking warning by her misery, perseuer in the good way we haue begun, without turning backe, least els we be also conuerted into pillars of salt. Whereby others may heerafter be conserued, and drawen to perseuer, when they behold the example of our fall. O how many may we looke vpon at this day, who serue vs now for nothing but to be pillars of salt, wherby

we

we may be the better kept. Let vs profit by the misery of others, and let vs take heed of giuing others meanes, to profit so by ours.

The Blessed Saints *Augustine* and *Hierome* adde further, that, to beginne well, and to end ill, is to doe a kind of monstrous thing, because those actions and workes, the beginning wherof is grounded vpon Iustice and reason, & the end in sensuality and sinne, are meere Chimera's & phantasticall things. *Cum enim sic agitur, humano capiti, ceruicem pictor equinam, iungit*. It is say they, as if a painter should adde the necke of a horse to the head of a man, which were a monster. So is it to beginne well, and to end ill. And this also is that, wherewith the Blessed Apostle *S. Paul*, casts the Galathians in the teeth, who were returned backe from the way of truth: *Sic stulti estis, ut cum spiritu coeperitis, nunc carne consummemini*? Are you so very foolish, as that hauing begunne in spirit, you would make an end in flesh? Who hath so beguiled, and euen bewitched you? *O insensati Galatae, quis vos fascinauit, non obedite*

*Aug. serm.
8. ad Frat.
in eremo.*

*Hier. sup.
illa verba
Matth. 24
Qui autem
perseuera-
uerit us-
que in fine.*

Gal. 3. 3.

To the end that we may perseuer & obtaine this great fauour of our Lord, we must procure to ground our selues very well in vertue, and mortification. For if a man be not well grounded, he will shrink & fall. Those apples, which be worme-eaten, are they, which quickly fall, and arriue not to the season of their ripenesse, but such as are sound and good, continue vpon the tree, and come to perfectiō. And iust so, if you be not solidely vertuous, but carry a certaine vaine hart in your bosome; if there within, you haue any little worme of presumption, and pride, or impatience, or any other inordinate affection, it will go gnawing and sucking vp the iuyce, and weakning the very substance and strength of your soule, and so put you to runne hazard of loosing perseuerance: *Optimum est enim gratia stabilire cor,* Heb. 13.9 sayth the Apostle. It imports vs much to fortify, and to establish our hartes with the grace of our Lord, and by the practise of true and solide vertue.

Albertus Magnus declares very well
how

how we may grow to found our selues
 in vertue , that so we may perseuer
 therein. He sayth, that the true seruant
 of God, is to be so grounded in vertue,
 and to haue it so fixed and wrought in-
 to the very rootes of his hart , that it
 may euer be in his power to exercise
 it , without depending more or lesse
 vpon any thing, which others can ey-
 ther do or say. Some there are, who
 when occasions doe not occurre , but
 that all thinges succeed according to
 their gust, will seeme to be humble, &
 to enioy a great depth of peace : but
 when any occasion, though it be but a
 light one , presentes it selfe , the peace
 is gone, and the men let you see, what
 they are. Now *Albertus Magnus* sayth,
 that the vertue of peace and of humili-
 ty is not so properly in them, as in those
 others , since those others take it from
 these, when they will, and when they
 will be so gracious, at other times, they
 giue them also leaue to enioy it. This
 is called , *Being good, through the vertue
 which is possessed by others* ; As they of the
 world are wont to say to such as praise
 them : *You are pleased, Sir, to say this, out*

*Albertus
 Magnus in
 Ench. de
 veris per-
 fectisque
 virtutibus
 cap. 13.*

188 The I. Treatise. Chap. XVIII.

*of your owne goodnesse. And it is true. But now you must not be good by others vertue, but by your owne, which may dwell in you, and not depend vpon others. Some do very well compare these men to certayne pooles of standing water, who, if you stirre them not, do not stinke: but if you do, they are not to be endured. And so these men whilst you trouble them not, but let all go according to their gust, seeme to be water, like any CrySTALL; but if you stirre them neuer so little, you will find, what an ill saour they giue. Tan-
Psal. 143. ge montes, & fumigabunt.*

5.

Of another meanes for profiting in vertue, which is exhortations and spirituall courses, and how we may take benefit thereby.

CHAP. XVIII.

AMongst other helpes or meanes; which Religious Orders haue, and particularly the Society, towards the assisting & animating her children to profit in vertue, & proceed towards
Perfection

Perfection, the spirituall discourses & exhortations, which are vsed therein, is one, and one of the chiefe. For this, we haue an expresse Rule, and therefore I will heere touch some few considerations, by meanes whereof we may the more easily profit by them, for all men may take benefit and reape fruit by the sermons which they heare. The first thing, which we are to do, in order to this end, is to heare them not by custome or for complement, but with a true desire to profit, and reape fruit by them. Let vs consider with what an anxious kind of zeale and affection, those Fathers of the desert would go, when they were wont to meete in their spirituall conferences & collations, and what prouision they would carry thence, into their particular celled, and let vs also go with the same kind of anxiety, and desire, and then they will be sure to do vs good, as when a man goes to eate with appetite and hunger for then whatsoeuer he takes, doth him good. And Saint Iohn Chrysostome notes that as it is a signe of health, and of a good corporall disposition,

Chrys. hom.
4. & 32.
super Ge-
nesim.

sition, when a man eates his meate with a liuely appetite, and so to haue a great desire and hunger of hearing the word of God, is a signe that the soule is in good state, as also if you hunger not after it, and gult it not, it is an ill signe and you may know that you are sicke, since you haue lost your stomake, and cannot get downe this spirituall food. Now if herein, there were no other thing but euen this; namely to heare men treate & hold some little discourse of Almighty God, we were to go to these sermons with much comfort and ioy: For naturally, a man takes great pleasure, that they talke to him of the person, whome he greatly loues, and therefore, if you loue God, you will ioy in hearing men speake of him. And therefore Christ our Lord sayd: *Qui ex Deo est, verba Dei audit*, He who is of God, heares the word of God. And on the other side, of such as gult not to heare the word of God, he instantly addes: *Propterea vos non auditis, quia ex Deo non estis*: Do you not heare it, because you are not of God.

Ioan. 8.

47.

Secondly, to the end that we may
profit

profit by these spirituall discourses, it will be needfull that we go not to the with curiosiry, attending to the manner and grace, wherewith they are deliuered, and to obserue, whether they carry any new and extraordinary conceits in them, but that we take off our eyes from thence, and place them vpon the substance of that, which is deliuered to vs. For the committing of error in this kind, is one of the things, which we our selues are wont to reprehend in worldly men, by occasion whereof we tell them, that they take little benefit by Sermons. What would we say of that sicke man, whome the Chirurgion is gone to let bloud, if he would not suffer him to do it, but would needs entertaine himselfe with gazing vpon the instruments, and say? O what a dainty lancet is this? What a curious razor? What a complete case? I wonder where it was made. Fy-fy let these thinges alone, giue him leaue to open the veyne; for this is that which importes, and the rest is nothing to the purpose. Iust so are they, who care not for the substance of what you say, though

though yet that be the sole thing,
 whereof they haue need, but only for
 the trace, and way, and wordes, wher-
 with it is deliuered. They compare
 these men very well to the Sereele
 which dismisses and lets fall the pure
 and solid corne, and retaines only the
 chaffe and branne for it selfe. The holy
 Scripture sayth, in the second Booke of
Esdra 2. *Esdra*, that when *Esdra* read the word
 cap. 8. 11. of our Lord to the people of Israel, the
 people was so moued by it, and vne-
 der so great lamentations and cryes,
 when they considered of their liues &
 actions according to that rule, which
 there was presented to them, that it
 was necessary, that the Leuites should
 passe vp and downe in the presse, to
 quiet the people, and make silence,
 that so the preacher might be able to
 go forwards in his sermon. In such sort
 as this, must exhortations and Sermons
 be heard with compunction, and con-
 fusion of mind, euery one comparing
 his owne life, with what he heares, &
 considering how different we are from
 that which there they tel vs we should
 be, and in how great distance we liue
 from

To profit by spirit. exhortations. 193

from that perfection, to which we are exhorted by them.

Thirdly, all men must vnderstand (whereby also that is better confirmed, which we spake of before) that these spirituall discourses, are not ordayned for the deliuey of new and extraordinary thinges, but only to reduce those knowne and common thinges to our memory, about the execution and practise wherof, we must vse more diligence and care. And we must go to them with this presupposition, & then hauing cast away al curiosity, we shall receaue the more benefit therby.

To this only end our Blessed Father ordaynes, that spirituall discourses shall be made in the Society. For in the third parte of the Constitutions, when first he had set down the Rules, which are drawne out for vs in the Sūmary, he sayth. Let some one be appointed, who weekly, or at least once in fiftē day, may giue these or the like admonitions, for feare least through the frailty of our nature, we grow first to forget them, & afterward to omit the execution therof. And heere, by the way

3. parte
Const. c. 1,
§. 28.

N

Father

Father Natalis notes, in the declarations, which he wrote vpon the Constitutions, that although that disiunctiue *Euery eight dayes, or fifteen dayes at the least,* were found in the Constitutions aforesayd, yet the generall practise of the Society is, that they should performe it euery weeke, and not differ it till fifteen dayes. The Society tooke the better course, & no man could tell, what the Society vsed better then he; for he visited it almost all, and knew well the generall practise thereof; so that these spirituall discourses, be ordained to refresh our memory, in what we know; that so we may not easily forget goodnes, for which purpose we haue need to haue it often remembred and repeated to vs. Yea and though we remembred it wel enough, yet we haue need to be often called vpon, & to be told againe and againe, of our obligation, and our profession, for the awaking and quickening of our desire and will. For that sentence of S. Augustine is a very true one: *Præuolat intellectus, sequitur tardus, vel nullus affectus.* Our wil is yet eue more weak & sicke in

in the executing of that which is fit,
then the vnderstanding is for the know-
ledge thereof. And therefore it is who-
ly necessary to tell vs often of the same
things; and so did the Apostle S. Paul
to the Philippians, as himselfe relates: *Philip. 3.*

De cetero, fratres mei, gaudete in Domino: 1.

Eadem vobis scribere mihi quidem non pa-

gram, vobis autem necessarium. The A-

postle was not out of matter, he could

well haue told them of new & exquis-

ite things, he who had beene rapt in-

to the third heauen: but for his parte,

he found himselfe obliged to write & repeat

the same, whereof he had told them before,

because this in fine, was most necessary for

them: And this is therefore that, to

which he, who makes sermons & spi-

rituall discourses, must attend, and not

to deliuer those things, which may

make him be thought more eloquent,

& learned, for this were but to preach

himself, whereas his duty is, to do the

hearers good. And to the same also,

must the hearers apply their thoughts,

and so they shall neuer be weary, of

hearing common and knowne things

deliuered. For they see, that they haue

need

196 The 1. Treatise. Chap. XVIII.

need thereof, because they put them
not in execution, or at least not with so
much perfection, as they should.

Fourthly, it will help much, that
whatsoever is deliuered in those ser-

mons, and spirituall discourses, every
particuler man take it so wholly to him
selfe, as if it belonged not to any other.

Let vs not heare those spirituall dis-
courses, as worldly men heare sermons.

There was a certaine great Preacher,
who sayd once in full Auditory: All
you, who heare me, are Caruers. For

as it is the office of a Caruer, to carue
the meate to others, and to retaine no-
thing to himselfe, iust so do you. For

when you heare me, you say: O what
a good point is that for such a one! O
how wel that other point fits such an-

other! O that such a neighbour of
myne had been heer, for that discourse
was euen made for him! and your sel-
ues in the meane tyme, keep nothing

for your selues, whereupon to picke.

But for my part, I am resolued to in-
uite you all, and you shall not be car-
uers, but ghests, to sit at the feast of the

Eccles. 21. word of God. *Ecclesiasticus* sayth: Ver-

bum sapiens, quodcunque audierit sciens, laudabit, & ad se adioiet; audiuit luxuriosus, & displicebit illi, & projiciet illud post dorsum suum. The wise and prudent man applyes to himselfe euery profitable word, which he heares; but the vicious and vaine person, is discontented at it, and castes it ouer the shoulder to other. But as for vs, let vs be of the wiser sorte, and let euery one of vs take that, which is sayd to himselfe, and as if it had beene only sayd to him, and as if no body had beene there but he. For that which you may thinke, would be fit for another, will peradventure proue much fitter for you; as it is plaine, that many tymes we see the mote in our Neighbours eye, and we find not that there is a great beame which blockes vp both our owne. And especially, because though at the present, we may perhapes find no use thereof, yet we may do well to keep it for after ward, when we may chance to need it, & God knowes how soone, so that you must alwaies take thinges as if they were sayd for you, and you alone.

Matth. 7.
5.

Fifthly (whereby yet this is also more declared) it importes very much, that all men vnderstand and goe euer on with this presupposition, that what is expressed or reprehended in our spirituall discourses, is not therefore implied to be vsed in the house at that tyme, but to the end, that it may neuer be vsed. For that Physicke, which preuents the infirmity, and preserues health, is much better then that which cures a man afterward. Now this doe we in our exhortations, according to the counsell of the Wise man: *Ausa languorem, adhibe medicinam.* Apply the remedy and the Physicke, before the infirmity arriue, exhorting men to that, which is good, & giuing due dispraise to sinne, that so men may not fall into that which already they know to be dangerous and ill. And therefore it were a great fault thus to iudge; That was spoken of for such a person: and much more were it a fault, to say so. For we pretend not, to taxe any man in particular; for this could not be prudently done, nor would it produce any good effect, but the contrary. And therefore

Ecclef. 18.
20.

he who should iudge so, would vpon the matter taxe the mā, who made the exhortation of a thing, which had byn very ill done.

But now, howsoeuer the man who preaches, or exhortes, is for his part, to vse the aforesayd circumspection and care; yet (for as much as may concerne the man who heares) it will be very fit, that euery one take all sayd, as to himselfe. Not to conceaue that he who preaches, had a mind to note or point at him; for this, as I haue already shewed before were ill done, but th at euery one should lay his hand vpon his owne hart, and go comparing his actions and his life with what he heares, and say: Certainly, this is all for me, I am in great need thereof: God put it into his mouth for my good. And thus a man will be able to draw much good from thence.

From that discourse of Christ our Lord to the Samaritā, the holy Ghost relates, that she went crying out, and saying: *Venite & videte hominem* Ioan. 4. *qui dixit mihi omnia quaecumque feci*

Come, and you shall see the man whom

hath told me whatsoever I haue done
in my whole life. When the Preacher
speakes indeed to the hearers, & telles
them what hath passed in their soules,
then is the sermon and discourse good;
and this is that which contentes and
fructifyes.

Sixthly, it is fit we vnderstand, that
the word of God is the food and nou-
rishment of the soule, and therefore we
must euer procure to get somewhat out
of exhortations and sermons, which
we may conserue and keep in our hart,
that so it may giue vs strength and
courage to work the better afterward.

Greg. ho. S. Gregory sayth vpon those wordes of
15. super Christ our Lord: *Quod autem in bonam*
Euang. *terram, hi sunt, qui corde bono & optimo*

Luc. 8. 15 *audientes verbum retinent, & fructum as-*

ferunt in patientia. That as it is a confi-
derable and dangerous kind of infirmi-
ty for a mā not to be able to keep cor-
porall food in the stomacke, but to cast
it instantly vp; so is it for a man, not
to be able to keep the word of God,

which he heares; but that as it comes
in at one eare, it must instantly go out
of another: *In corde meo abscondi eloquia*

mea.

+ VI

sua,

tua, vt non peccem tibi, sayd the Prophet David, I haue hid, O Lord, and kept thy words in my hart, that so I might not sinne, but might be able to resist temptation, and be animated towards vertue & perfection. How often doth it happen, that a man is tempted, and findes himselfe to be in danger, but remembering some passage of holy Scripture, or some other good consideration which he hath heard, he is strengthened and vphelp, and findes great help thereby. With three sentences of holy Scripture, Christ our Lord ouer-

Matth. 43

came the three temptations wherwith he was attempted by the Diuell. By all this it will be euident, how worthy of reprehension they are, who go to exhortations and sermons for fashions sake, or to spend their tyme in sleeping, or voluntary distractions, which is the same thing. The holy

Scripture sayth: *Venit Diabolus, & tollit* Mar. 4.
verbum de corde eorum ne credentes salui 15.

fiant. The Diuell comes, & takes Gods word out of their harts, to the end that they may not profit, and so be saued.

Luc. 8.12

These are Birdes of prey which deuoure

noure the corne as soone as it is sowed, that so it may neuer grow. Perhaps that word which you lost when you either slept, or were distracted, would haue beene the means of your increase in vertue, and the Diuell through his enuy of your good, procures by all the meanes he can, that it may not take root in your hart.

August.

S. Augustine sayth, that the word of God is as a Hooke, *Quod tunc capit, quando capitur*. And as when the Fish catches the hooke, it selfe is taken by it; so when you receaue the word of God, your selfe are taken by the same. And for this reason it is, that the Diuel procures with so much diligence, that you receaue it not, least so you should be made fast, & your hart engaged by that meanes. For which very reason, we must endeaour to heare exhortations and sermons with all excellent disposition, and so to receaue the word of God, as that it may engage our harts. *Estate factores verbi, & non auditores tantum, fallentes vosmetipsos*, sayth the Apostle S. Iames. Be not hearers only of the word of God, but workers also therof, and

Lac. 1. 22.

and deceaue not your selues in thinking, that you comply by hearing alone: *Quia si quis auditor est verbi, & non factor, hic comparabitur viro consideranti vultum naturae suae in speculo; considerauit enim se. & abiit, & statim oblitus est qualis fuerit.* For he who heares the word of God, and fullfilles it not is like a man looking in a glasse, who instantly vpon his going away, forgets his figure. These shall not be iustified, but they only, who will put it in pra-

ctise: *Non enim auditores legis iusti sunt apud Deum, sed factores legis iustificabuntur.* Rom 2.13.

In the *Pratum spirituale*, which was *spirituale* composed by *Euratus*, or as some say, by *S. Sophronius* the Patriarch of *Hierusalem*, and was approued by the second Council of *Nicee* it is recounted (as *Theodoret* declares in his Ecclesiasticall History) that the Holy man *Eusebius*, being one day sitting in company, with another called *Amianus* with the booke of the holy Gholpells before them. *Amianus* read, and the other went interpreting it to him. Now it happened, that certaine plough men being at worke ther by, *Eusebius* was distracted

by

by looking on them, and did not attend to what was read; and *Amianus* hauing some doubt, concerning that which he was reading, desired *Eusebius* to declare it to him: but *Eusebius* hauing not beene attentiuē, desired *Amianus* to read it to him once againe. But *Amianus* knowing by that, that the other had been distracted from what he was doing, reprehended him thus, & sayd: Is it not strange, that for delighting your selfe with the sight of certaine labouring men, you would not attend to the wordes of the Gospell? When *Eusebius* heard this reprehension, he was so confounded through the occasion thereof, that he imposed vpon his eyes, that they should neuer take delight more by looking either vpon that country, yea or so much as vpon the Starres of heauen. And from that time forward, he went thence by a certaine strait footeway, and shut himselfe vp into a miserable cottage, out of which he neuer went in his whole life, and in this close prison, did he continue fourty yeares, till he dyed. And because he would not only remaine ther
out

out of reason alone, but of necessity also, he tyed a girdle of iron about his loynes, and another more heauy, about his necke. And to these girdles of iron, he fastened an irō chaine, which he suffered to drage vpon the ground, that so he might perforce be made to stoope, and not be able either to walke freely, or yet to looke aside towards the country about him, or vp to the skye ouer him. In this manner did the seruant of God punish himselfe, for the only inaduertance and distraction which he had, whilest another was reading Gods word to him, which may serue for a confusion to vs, who make so little account of the many distractions, which we haue.

THE

IN THE
TABLE
OF THE
CHAPTERS

Contayned in this first
Treatise.

Chap. 1. **O**F the value and estima-
tion which we ought to
put vpon spirituall things. pag. 1.

Chap. 2. Of the affection and desire,
which we must carry to Vertue and Perfe-
ction. T pag. 19.

Chap. 3. That the hauing a great de-
sire to profit, is a very principall meanes, and
a good disposition to induce our Lord to do vs
many fauours. pag. 31.

Chap. 4. That the more a man giues
himselfe to spirituall things, the more appe-
tite

of Chapters.

the & desire he shall haue thereof. pag. 40.

Chap. 5. That it is a great signe of a mans being in state of grace, if he go on with desire to encrease, and improoue himselfe, in the way of spirit. pag. 49.

Chap. 6. VVherein it is declared, that the not going forward, is to go backward. pag. 54.

Chap. 7. That it helpes much for the obtayning of perfection, that a man forget the good, which formerly he did, and place his eyes vpon that, which now is wanting to him. pag. 65.

Chap. 8. That it helpes much towards the obtayning of perfection, to place our eyes vpon the doing of high, and excellent things. pag. 81.

Chap. 9. How much it importes to make account of small matters, and not to vnder value them. pag. 98.

Chap. 10. Of another principall reason, why it importes very much, to make account of small things. pag. 107.

Chap. 11. That we are not to vnder take the businesse of our increase in spirit, after a generall, but after a particular manner; and how highly it imports, that we put in practise those good purposes & desires, which

The Table

our Lord giues vs. pag. 120.

Chap. 12. That it will help vs much, towards the obtayning of perfection, not to commit any faultes at all of set purpose, nor to go on lesse, in the seruour of our deuotion.

pag. 129.

Chap. 13. Of three other meanes, which help vs to proceed in the way of Vertue.

pag. 135.

Chap. 14. That it will help vs much so to carry our selues still, as we did the first day whē we entred into Religion. pag. 154.

Chap. 15. That it will help a man much, to aske himselfe often this question: To what end didst thou come to Religion?

pag. 165.

Chap. 16. Of certayne other thinges, which will be able to help vs much, towards our spirituall profit, and for the obtayning of Perfection. **27 AP 58** pag. 165.

Chap. 17. Of the perseuerance, which we must haue in the practise of vertue; & of that which will help vs to haue it. pag. 180.

Chap. 18. Of another meanes for profiting in vertue, which is exhortations and spirituall discourses, and how we may take benefit thereby. 188.

FINIS,



THE SECOND
TREATISE
OF THE
PERFECTION
Of our ordinary actions.



That our profit and perfection consists
in the exact performance of our
ordinary actions.

CHAP. I.

I V S T E quod iustum est per- Deuterom.
sequeris, saith our Lord 16. 20.
his people. That which
is iust and good, must be
iustly, and well, and ex-
actly done. The businesse of our spiri-
A rual

2 The II. Treatise. Chap. I.

Full profit and perfection, consistes not in only doing the thinges belonging to it, but in doing them well; as it also consistes not in that one be a Religious, but a good Religious man. *S. Hierome* writing to *Paulinus* sayth: *Non Hierosolymus fuisse, sed Hierosolymis bene vixisse, laudandum est.* This *Paulinus*, esteemed highly of *S. Hierome*, because he remayned in those holy places, where Christ our Lord wrought the mysteries of the redemption of mankind; and therefore *S. Hierome* telles him, that, *Not to liue in Ierusalem, but to liue vertuously there, was worthy of prayse.* And this sentence is ordinarily brought to aduertise Religious men, that they are not to content themselves with the only being in Religion. *For as the habit maks not the Monke;* so neyther doth the place make a man holy or happy, but only the holy life he leades. So that the whole businesse consistes, not in the only being a Religious man, but in that he be a good Religious; and not in the bare performing the exercises of Religion, but in doing them exactly well. In that, which they proclaimed of Christ our Lord, according

Hieron.
epist. ad
Paul. 12.
Ep. Mon.

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actions. 3
ding to the relation of S. Marke: *Bene omnia fecit*, He did all things well; in Mar. 7.
this Well, doth all our good and happy- 37.
nesse consist.

It is a most certaine truth, that both
all our good, & all our misery consists,
in doing our works well or ill; because
our selues are such as our workes are. It
is they, who declare, what men are.
For by the fruit you shall know the
tree. S. *Augustin* sayth, that man, is the *August. de*
tree, and workes are the fruits it beares, *ser. Dom.*
so that euery man is knowne by the *in monte*
fruit of his workes. For this reason did *secundum*
Christ our Lord say of those hypocrites *Math. 7.*
and false Preachers; *A fructibus eorum* 16.
cognoscetis eos. By the fruit of their *Ioan. 10.*
workes, you shall know what kind of 25.
men they are; and on the other side
he sayth of himselfe: *Opera. qua ego fa-*
cio, in nomine Patris mei; hac testimonia per-
hibent de me. The workes, which I do,
giue testimony of me: *Et si mihi non vultis*
credere, operibus credite: And if you will
not belieue me, yet belieue my workes;
for they will tell you, who I am. Not
only do the workes of euery one de-
clare, what he is in this life, but what
also

4 The II. Treatise. Chap. 1.

also he is to be in the next. For such shall we be eternally in the next life, as our workes shall haue beene in this ; For our Lord will reward euery one, according to his workes, as holy Scripture doth often declare, as well in the old, as new Testament. *Quia tu reddes vnique iuxta opera sua* : And the Apostle S. Paul :

Psal. 61. *Qua seminauerit homo, hac & metet.* As
13. Math. men sow, they shall reap.

36. 27. But let vs descend to particulars,
Rom. 2. 6. and see, what workes those are, wher-
1. Cor. 3. in our whole good, our whole spiritu-
8. Gal. 6. all profit, and our whole perfection
8. consistes. To this I say, that they are

the ordinary and dayly workes we do. In making well the Prayer, which we dayly make ; in making our Examens well ; in hearing or saying Masse, as we ought, in reciting our office, and performing our other deuotions with attention and reuerence ; in continually exercising our selues in pennance, and mortification, in performing that place and office well, to which we are enioyned by Obedience : in this, I say, our profit and perfection consistes ; And if we performe these things with perfection

Of the perfection of our ordinary actions. §
fection, we shall be perfect; and if with
imperfection, imperfect. This is there-
fore the difference, betweene the good
and perfect Religious man from the o-
ther, who is remisse and imperfect; and
it doth not consist in the ones doing ey-
ther any more, or any other thinges,
then the other; but in the doing them
with perfection, more or lesse. So that
he is the good and perfect Religious
man, who doth those thinges exactly
well; and the other is therefore imper-
fect, because he doth them negligently
and ill; and how much the more a man
eyther exceeds or falls short, in this,
so much the more perfect or imperfect
will that man fall out to be.

In that Parable of the *Sower*, who
went out to Sow his seed, the holy
Ghospell sayth, that euen the same
seed, and being sown in good earth,
in some part gaue the increase of *thirty*,
in some of *sixty*, and of a *hundred* in some
other. Wherein, (as the Saints declare)
the three degrees of such, as serue our
Lord, are set out; the first beginners,
or Incipients; the Proficients, & finally,
Perfect mē. We al sowe the same seed: for

Math. 13.
8. & 23.

6 The II. Treatise. Chap. I.

we all performe the same workes, and obserue the same Rule: we all keep the same time both of our Prayer and of our Examens; and from morning to night, we are employed by Obedience; but yet, withall this, *Homo homini quid praestat?* What a deale of difference there is betweene one Religious man and another? For in one, he who sowes these workes, bringes forth the fruit of a *hundred*; because he performes them with spirit and perfection; and these are the Perfect men; in the other, they yield fruit, yet not so much, but only of *sixty*; and these are they, who are Proficients; in that other they yield only *thirty*; and these are but Beginners in the seruice of God. Now therefore, let euery one looke; in what Classe he is. See, if you be at least in that of *thirty*; yea and I pray God, that there may be none of them, of whome the Apostle

1. Cor. 3. 12. says; That vpon the foundation of Fayth they haue built *wood and hay and straw*, which is to burne in the day of our Lord. Be sure, that you do nothing for vanity, and for humane respects, and to content such as see you, that so they may

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actions. 77
may haue you in some account; for this
were to build wood, & hay, & straw,
which is to burne in Purgatory, at the
least; but procure you to do what you
are to do exactly and well; for this
will be to build siluer, & gold, & pre-
cious stones.

It will be very well vnderstood,
that our spirituall profit and perfection
consistes herein, by this reason. All our
profit and perfection, consists in two
things; In doing that which God com-
maundes; and in doing it, so, as he com-
maundes; for it seemes, that more then
this, cannot be desired. Now as for the
first, of doing those things which God
requires at our hands, already we haue
it by his mercy in our Religious state.
And this is one of the greatest blessings,
and of the highest comforts, which we
who liue vnder Obedience, possesse;
namely, that we are sure, that whatso-
euer we do, and vpon whatsoever we
employ our selues by Obedience, that
is the very thing, which God expects
at our hands; and this is as a first Prin-
ciple taken out of the Ghospell, and
out of the Ghospell, and out of the

8 The II. Treatise, Chap. 1.

9. p. 174. Saints, as we will shew afterward,
 5. c. 10. 6 when we shall come to treat of Obe-
 12. dience: *Qui vos audit, me audit*. By obey-
 Luc. 10. ing our superiour, we obey God, and
 16. we performe his will; for that is the
 very thing, which God commaundes
 vs to do at that time. So that there rests
 but the second point, which is to do
 things in such sort, as God requires
 them to be done; that is to say, exactly
 well, and with perfection; For so doth
 he desire, that we should do them. And
 this is that, whereof we are now going
 to treat.

Chron.
 Ord. Ci-
 ster.

It is related in the Chronicle of the
 Cistercian Order, that the glorious *Saint*
Bernard being once at Marrins, with his
 Monkes, saw many Angels, who were
 noting, and writing both that which
 the Monkes were doing, and in what
 manner they did it; and that of some,
 the Angells wrote with gold, of others
 with siluer, of others with inke, and of
 others with water; according to that
 feuerall spirit & attention, wherewith
 euery one of them respectiue-ly did ey-
 ther sing or prayes; and of some they
 wrote nothing at all: Because howso-
 euer

Of the perfection of our ordinary actions. 9
euer they were there in person, yet
their affections & thoughts were farre
from thence, as being distracted and di-
uerted vpon impertinent things. And
it sayth, that he also saw, especially at
the *Te Deum laudamus*, the Angels were
solicitous to make the Monkes sing it
very deuoutly; and that out of the
mouthes of some of them, who began
to sing the hymne, there issued, euen as
the very flames of fire. Now therefore
let euery one consider, what kind of
Prayer he makes, and whether it de-
serues to be written with gold, or sil-
uer, or inke, or water, or else indeed
not to be written at all. Consider, whe-
ther when you are at prayer, there issue
out of your harts or mouthes any flams
of fire, or rather whether you do not
stretch, or yawne. Consider whether
you be not there in body only, and per-
happs with your mind eyther at your
study, or about your office, or in some
businesse, or in fine, about other im-
pertinent things.

That we are to be greatly animated towards
Perfection, in regard, that God
hath placed it in things,
which are very easy.

C H A P. II.

*Magister
Natalis.*

FA T H E R *Natalis* a very eminent
member of our Society for his great
vertue and learning, when he came to
visite the Prouinces of Spayne, did
leauē it amongst vs as a thing which he
recommended in most particuler man-
ner, that we should be often inculca-
ting this truth. That all our spirituall
profit and perfection, was to consist in
the doing of such particuler, ordinary,
and daily actions, which we haue in
hand, exactly well. So that our pro-
fit and improuement of our liues, doth
not stand vpon our multiplying other
extraordinary workes, nor in perfor-
ming certaine high & vnusuall things,
but in doing with perfection the most
ordinary actions of our Rule, and in
discharging those places, into which
we are put by Obedience, though o-
therwise

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 11
therwise they may be the poorest
things in the world. For this is that,
which God expects at our hands, and
therefore vpon this must we fixe our
eyes, if we desire to please him, and to
obtaine perfection. Now heere, we
shall do well to consider and ponder,
with how little cost of ours, we may
be Perfect, since we may be so, by do-
ing those very thinges, which we do,
without the additiō of any more. This
is a point of high comfort for vs all, and
which in reason must greatly encou-
rage vs towards Perfection. Yffor your
being Perfect we should demaund cer-
taine exquisite & extraordinary things,
certaine high contemplations, or ele-
uations at your hands, you might well
excuse your selues by saying it were
not in your power, and that you would
not presume to aspire so high. Yfwe
should require, that you would dayly
discipline your selues in bloud, or that
you would fast in bread and water, or
else go barefoot, or euerlastingly were
a hairecloath; you might well make
answere, that you haue not strength
for so much; but now we put you not
to

to this, neyther doth your perfection consist therein, but in doing the very things you do, but yet still with this, that you must do them well. By the performing of the very workes you do, you may be perfect if you will, the provision is already made; the charge is defrayed, and there is no need of adding or doing more. Who then is he, who will not be animated hereby to be perfect, since Perfection is already in his hand, by his performing things, which are so ordinary and easy, God sayd thus to his people, that he might animate them to the performance & obseruance of his Law; *Mandatum hoc, quod ego precipio tibi hodie, non supra te est, nec procul positum, nec in celo situm, vt possis dicere quis nostrum valet ad calum ascendere, vt deferat illud ad nos, vt audiamus atque opere cōpleamus? neq; trans mare positum, vt causeris & dicas, quis ex nobis poterit transfrangere mare, & illud ad nos vsque deferre, vt possimus audire, ac facere quod preceptum est?* This commaundement, which now I giue thee, is not a thing eyther far remote or greatly raysed aboue thee; nor is it put vpon the hornes of the mo one, that

Deuter.
30. 11.

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 13
 that so thou shouldst say: who amongst
 vs can rise so high, as to reach it, nor is
 it also a thing, which is planted beyond
 the seas that so thou might haue colour
 to say: who amongst vs can passe the
 Seas, and fetch it from Countieyes so
 farre off? *Sed iuxta te est sermo valde in*
ore tuo, & in corde tuo, vt facias illum. It is
 not so farre off, but it lyes close by thee,
 and it is wholly in thy hand. Now the
 same may we say of Perfection, wher-
 of now we treat. And so the Blessed
 S. Antony did exhorre and animate his
 disciples to perfection, by the same ar-
 gument. *Graci, studia transmarina sectan-*
tur; regnum autem calorum intra vos est.
 The Grecians, sayth he, for the acqui-
 ring of Philosophy, and other humane
 sciences, make great iourneyes by land,
 and long voyages by sea, & put them-
 selues vpon great labours and hazards;
 but we, for the obtrayning of vertue &
 perfection, (which is true Wildome,)
 haue no need of all this, nor so much as
 to go out of doores; because we shall
 find it all at home, and euen, if we wil,
 in our owne harts, *Regnum Dei intra vos.* Luc. 17.
est. In the ordinary and dayly thinges, 21.
 which

Antonius
 Abbas.

which you do, is your perfection placed.

Men are wont very ordinarily in their spirituall conferences, to aske to-wardes any tyme of deuotion as namely of Lent, Aduent, Pentecost, or the Renouation of Vowes; of what means we might best serue our selues, for the disposing & preparing vs in those occasions, and against those tymes, and you shall see a number of helpes and considerations proposed, and they wil all be good; but yet the principall meanes and help vpon which we are most to rely, is this, whereof we are now speaking, namely that we perfect our selues in the ordinary thinges, which we haue to do. Goe remoouing the faults and imperfections, to which we are subiect, in these ordinary and daily thinges, and procure euery day to do them better; and this will be a very good preparation to all, or rather the very best, to all purposes. Let your thoughts beate principally vpon this, and let all those other meanes & considerations, serue you in order to this.

In what the goodnesse and perfection of our actions consistes, and of some meanes for the performing them well.

CHAP. III.

B V T now let vs see, wherein the well performing of our actions consistes, that so we may passe on, to the meanes, which may help vs to performe them well. I say then briefly, that it consistes in two thinges. The first and principall is, that we must do them purely for the loue of God. *Saint Ambrose* askes, why, in the creation of the world, God creating things corporall and animall, he falles instantly to prayse them all. God creates plantes & trees, and instantly he saith: *Et vidit Deus quòd esset bonum.* God created beasts and birdes and fishes, & presently said: *Et vidit Deus, quòd esset bonum:* And God saw that it was good. He created the Heauens, the Starres, and the Sunne and Moone; and presently he also said: *Et vidit Deus, quòd esset bonum.* He pray-
sed all those thinges, as soone as he had
created

*Ambros.
lib. Instit.
Virg. ad
Euseb. c. 3.*

*Genes. 1.
10. 12. 18.
21. 25.*

created them; but coming to the creation of man, he only seemes to haue remained without prayſing, becauſe he added not instantly the teſtimony of prayſe, as he had done to thoſe other thinges. What may be the miſtery, and what ſhould be the cauſe hereof? Will you know what? The Saint tells vs, that the reaſon of this is, that the beauty and naturall goodneſſe of theſe corporall thinges and liuing creatures, conſiſtes in the exterior, which appeares, and that there is no further perfection in them, then ſuch, as whereof the eye can iudge; & therefore that they were instantly prayſed. But now, the goodneſſe and perfection of man, conſiſtes not in the exterior, & apparence, but lyes within, and is hidden there. *Omnis gloria eius Filia Regis, ab intus.* All the beauty of that man, who is the Sonne of God, lyes within; and this is that which is pleaſing in the ſight of God.

1. Reg. 16. Homo enim videt ea qua patent, Dominus autem intuetur cor, ſayd God to Samuel. Men ſee the exterior only, and are eyther pleaſed or diſpleaſed therewith; but God behouldes the hart; God lookes

Pſal. 44.
14.

1. Reg. 16.
7.

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 17
lookes vpon the intention and the end,
for which euery one doth his workes;
& therefore he would not prayse man,
as soone as he had created him, as he
did the rest of the creatures. The inten-
tion we haue in working, is the roote
and foundation of the goodnesse, and
perfection of our workes. The lowest
foundations of any building are not
seene; but yet these are they, which
sustaine the whole.

The second point, which our works
require, that so they may be made per-
fect, is, that we do, what on our parte
we can, for the making them perfect.
It is not inough, that your intention
be good: It is not inough, that you say
you do them for the loue of God; but
you must endeauour to performe them
the best you cā; that so you may please
God, more and more, by them. Let
therefore your doing thē, for the meere
loue of God, be the first meanes for the
doing them well. For this will make
vs do them the best we can; that so we
may please God the more, though our
Superiours see vs not, nor any other be
looking on vs; but in fine like men,
B who

B. Ignatius.

who do them meereley for the loue of God. Our Blessed Father Ignatius asked once a certayne Brother, who was a little negligent in his charge, Brother, for whose sak are you doing that? The other answered, that he did it for the loue of God; But our Father replied thus to him: I assure you, If you do it no better then thus, hereafter, I will giue you a good pennance. If you did it but for men, the fault were not great, though you should do it after this negligent manner; but since you do it for so great a Lord, the fault is very great, in that you do it no better.

The second meanes, which the Saints assigne, as very efficacious to this purpose, is to be alwaies going in the presence of God. Euen Seneca was wont to say, That a man, who were desirous to obtaine vertue, and to performe his actions well, were to imagine himselfe in the presence of some person of great veneration, and to whome he carryed high respect; and then to say, and do all thinges, as indeed he would say and do them, if he were really in his presence.

Senec. *Sic viue, tamquam sub alicuius boni viri, ac*
 epist. 25. *semper praesentis, oculis.* But now if this
 were

Of the perfection of our ordinary actiōs. 19
 were sufficient to make a man per-
 forme his actions wel, how much more
 efficacious a meanes wil it be, to walke
 in the presence of God, and to haue
 him euer before our eyes; and to con-
 sider, that he is still looking on, especi-
 ally since this is no imagination, as that
 other was; but that really and truly it
 is so, as the holy Scripture so often re-
 peates to vs. *Oculi Domini multò plus lu-
 cidiores sunt super Solem, circumspicientes
 omnes vias hominum, & profundum abyssi, &
 hominū corda intuentes in absconditas partes.*

We will treat hereafter a parte, of
 this exercise of going in the Presence of
 God, and how excellent and profitable
 it is, and how much esteemed, and re-
 commended by the Saints; but now
 we will only take from thence for our
 purpose, the shewing how important
 it is for vs, to performe our ordinary
 actions exactly well; & indeed it is of
 so great moment, (as we will shew in
 the other Treatise) as that we are not
 only to rest in that of the Presence of
 God; but it is to serue vs for a meanes,
 towards the performing of our actions
 as we ought; and that if, by maintay-

Eccles. 23.

28.

Iob. 34.

21. & c.

31. 4.

Pron. 5.

21.

*2. Para-
 lib. 16. 9.*

Treat. 6.

ning an attention to the sayd Presence of God, we should be slacke in our actions, and commit faultes therein, it would not be a deuotion, but an illusion. Yea and some adde further and say, that the Presence of God, which we are to keep, and which the holy Scripture, and the Saints recommend so much, is cheerefully to procure the doing of our actions so very well, as that they may be fit to appeare in his sight, and that there may be nothing vnworthy in them, of his presence, who is then looking on. And this seemes to be that, which the Euangelist S. Iohn would giue vs to vnderstand in his Apocalyps; where, relating the properties of those holy Beastes, whome he saw before the Throne of God, ready pressed to obey his commaundes, he sayth, *That they were full of eyes both within and without, and round about.* Eyes in the feet, eyes in the hands, eyes in the eares, eyes in the lippes and eyes in the very eyes themselues. To signify, that they who will serue God in perfection, and so as to be worthy of his presence, are euer to be looking about,

Apoc. 4.8.

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 21
to the end, that they do nothing, which
may seeme vnworthy of the presence
of God. You are to be full of eyes both
within and without, that you may see
how you walke, see how you speake,
see how you heare, yea see how you
see, see how you thinke, and will, and
desire, to the end that in all your acti-
ons, there may be no one little thing,
which may offend the pure eyes of
God, in whose high and diuine pre-
sence you stand. This is a very good
māner of going in the presence of God.
And therefore both *Ecclesiasticus*, and
the Apostle *Saint Paul*, instead of that,
which is sayd in *Genesis*, of *Enoch*: *Ambu-
lauitq cum Deo*, which is the same with
(*coram Deo*) & non apparuit, quia tulit eum
Dominus; deliuer it thus: *Enoch placuit
Deo, & translatus est in Paradisum*: *Enoch*
was pleasing to God, and was transla-
ted into Pararadise. Giuing vs cleerely
to vnderstand therby, that it is the same
thing in different wordes, to walke al-
wayes with God, or in the presence of God,
and to please God; since the one of these
tearmes, declares the other. And *S. Au-
gustine* and *Origen*, do in this manner

*Genes. 5.
24. Eccli.
44. 16.
Hebr. 11.
5.*

*Augustin.
Origenes.*

Exod. 18.
12.

expound that, which the holy Scripture mentions in *Exodus*, that when *Iethro* came to visite his Sonne-in-law *Moyſes*, *Aaron* and all the chiefe men of *Israel* came thither, that they might eate with him in the preſence of God. *Vt comederent panem, cum eo eorum Deo.* He intended not to ſay, that they met to eate before the *Tabernacle* or the *Arke*; for there was no ſuch thing at that tyme: but that they met togeather to feaſt him, and to eate and drinke, & reioyce with him; but yet with ſo great piety, and ſanctity, and with ſuch a kind of Religious and deuout carriage, as became men, who fed in the preſence of God; procuring that there might be nothing, which would offend his diuine ſight. In ſuch ſort as this, do iuſt and perfect men, walke in the preſence of God, in all their actions, and euen ſuch as are moſt indifferent, or elſe neceſſary for the ſupport of this mortall life. *Iuſti epulentur, & exultent in conſpectu Dei, & delectentur in letitia.* Let iuſt and holy men, ſayth the Prophet, *Eate and drinke in Gods Name, and let them reioyce and recreate themſelues*
at

Pſ. 67. 4.

Of the perfection of our ordinary actions. 23
at fit tymes, but yet still, in the presence of
God. Let it be in such sort, as that all
may seeme worthy of his sight, & no-
thing vnworthy of his presence.

By this meanes also, say many
Saints, that those wordes of Christ our
Lord, in the holy Ghospell, are fulfil-
led: *Oportet semper orare, & non deficere*;
and *S. Paul* to the Thessalonians: *Sine*
intermissione orate; for they say, That he
euer prayes, who doth euer well. So af-
firmes *S. Augustine*, vpon those wordes
of the Psalmist, *Tota die laudem tuam*.
Will you find, sayth he, a very good
meanes, how to be giuing prayse to
God, all day long? *Quicquid egeris, bene*
age, & laudasti Deum. Whatsoever you
do, do it well, and so you shall be al-
wayes praying God. The same, sayth
S. Hilary: *Per hoc enim efficitur, vt sine in-*
termissione oremus. cum per opera Deo placi-
ta, & in gloriam eius semper exercita. sancti
cuiusque viri vita omnis, oratio sit; ac sic se-
cundum legem, nocte dieque viuendo. vita ip-
sa, nocturna legis erit, & diurna meditatio.
And *S. Hierome* vpon that verse; *Lau-*
date eum sol & luna, Laudate eum omnes
stella & lumen; asks, how the Sunne

Luc. 18.

2.

Thef. 5.

17.

August.

sup. ps.

34. conc.

2. in fine.

Pf. 34.

28.

Hilar. in.

ps. 1. sup.

ulla. Et.

in lege eius

meditabi-

tur die ac

nocte.

Hieron.

Pf. 148. 3.

24 The II. Treatise. Chap. III.
 and Moone, the light and starres, can
 prayse God, and he answers: *In eo, quod
 à suo officio, & seruitio non recedunt, serui-
 tium ipsorum laus Dei est.* Wil you know,
 how they prayse him? They do it, by do-
 ing their duty exactly, and by seruing him, &
 performing all things accoding to that end, for
 which they were created, & this is to be euer
 praying God. So that he, who exactly
 performes his duty, he, who exactly
 goes through the ordinary, and dayly
 workes of Religion, that man is euer
 praying God, & is in continuall pray-
 er. And this we may confirme by that,
 which the Holy Ghost sayth, by the
 mouth of the Wiseman. *Qui conseruat le-
 gem, multiplicat orationem; Sacrificium sa-
 lutare est, attendere mandatis, & discedere
 ab omni iniquitate.* Hereby therefore we
 may well see, of how great value and
 perfection it is, to performe very well
 the ordinary things, which we haue in
 hand; since this very thing, is a multi-
 plication of prayer, and it is a continu-
 all going in the presence of God, and a
 very acceptable sacrifice, which is
 highly pleasing to his diuine Maiesty.

Eccli. 35.

1.

*Vulgata
 correctâ
 legit obla-
 tionem.*

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 25

Of another meanes, for the well performing
of our actions, which is to do them so,
as if we had nothing else, in
this world, to do.

CHAP. IIII.

A Third means, for making vs per-
forme our actions very well, is to
do enery thing in such sort, as if we had
no other thing in the world to do. To
make our prayer, to say Masse, to pray
vpō our Rosary, to recite our office, as
if we had no other thing to do; and the
same is to be sayd of all the rest. Who is
offering to trouble vs? Let vs not con-
fōnd our works; nor let one thing hin-
der another; but let vs euer attēd to that
which we are doing at that tyme. Whē
we are at Prayer, let vs not thinke of
our study, or our office, or any other
businesse; for such thoughtes would
but serue to spoile the prayer, and not
to do wel, either the one, or the other;
besides, that all the rest of the day is
free for the office, and for the study, &
for the other employment: *Omnia tem-*

pus habent. Let vs giue euery thing his

Ecel. 3. 1. proper tyme: *Sufficit diei malitia sua*.

Mash .6. Let the labour of euery day belong to

34. it selfe. This is so iust a thing, and so agreeable to mans reason, that euen Pagan

s void of sayth, haue taught it;

that so they might treat them with

more reuerence, whome they esteemed

to be their Gods; for from thence

came that old Prouerbe *Adoraturi sedant*.

Let them, who are to treat with

God, do it at great leasure, & with attention

and repose, and not cursorily,

and with the mind els where. *Plutarch*

treating of the estimation and reuerence,

wherwith the Priests of his tyme,

came to their Gods, sayth, That whilst

the Priest was sacrificing, there was

wont to be a man, who neuer ceased

from crying out these words, in a loud

voice: *Hoc age, hoc age*. Do that which

you are doing. Attend to this businesse,

& be not distracted; looke well to

that, which you are now dispatching.

This is therefore the meanes or help,

which we assigne now, namely to attend

with the whole man to that,

which we may be doing from tyme to

tyme

Paulus
Manut in
Adag.
Plutar.

Of the perfection of our ordinary action. 27
 tyme, and to do it of purpose, and at
 good leasure, and indeed, as if we had
 no other thing in the world to doe:
Hoc age. Do that which you are doing.
 Be present where you are, place all
 your diligence and care vpon the pre-
 sent occasion, and dismisle all other
 thinges, & so you shall do euery thing
 well. *Quod nunc instat agamus.* There
 was a Philosopher, who would needs
 proue, that we were only to attend to
 that, which we were doing at the
 present, & not to that which is either
 past, or yet to come, and he did it by
 this reason: Because the present is that
 which only is in our owne hand, and
 not either the past, or the future; for
 that is already past, and therefore is no
 longer in our power, and as for the o-
 ther, we are not sure, that euer it will
 come. O that a mā could once obtaine
 of himselfe, and were so truely a Lord
 of his whole mind, & of al histhoughts
 and imaginations, that he could fore-
 beare to thinke of any other thing, but
 only of that which he were doing; but
 so great is the instability of our hart, on
 the one side, and the malice and craft
 of

Atistipus
refers
Aelian.
lib. 14.
Histor.

of the Diuell so extreme on the other, that he seruing himselfe thereof, brings to our mind certaine thoughts & cares of what we are to doe afterward, that so he may euacuate and destroy that which we are doing at the present. This is a common and very hurtfull & preiudiciall temptation of our enemy; for heereby he procures that we may neuer do any one thing well. And for this it is, that the Diuell bringes vs thoughts of our businesse, and of our study, and of our office or charge, and makes vs thinke how we shall performe this, or that: to the end that indeed we may not make our Prayer well, about which we are then employed; & vpon cōdition that he may effect that, he will not spare to represent a thousand wayes to you, how you may performe that other thing; because now you are not about that other; and whē that other tyme shall arriue, he will not fayle to fit you with some other motiue, whereby you may be as much disabled from doing that well too:

2. ad Cor. *Non enim ignoramus cogitationes eius.* We

2. 11. vnderstand his purpose well. Let
you

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actions. 25
you, the future alone, and trouble not
your selfe with the care thereof; for
though it will be good to thinke of it
afterward, it is not good to do it now,
and when there shall come any temp-
tation vnder colour, that perhaps you
will not remember that afterward,
which presentes it selfe to you now;
you may see euen by that very thing,
that this thought is not of God, but a
meere temptation of the Diuell, be-
cause God is no friend of confusion, but
of rest and peace, and of agreement &
order, and therefore that which takes
peace, and rest and order from these
things, is not God, but the Diuell,
who loues disturbance and confusion.
Cast these thinges liuely from you, &
put your trust in God; for you doing
things as you ought, he wil find means
in fit tyme, that you shall be able to
performe those other thinges, & with
aduantage. And though some choise
reason, or some excellent conceit, or
some solide argument or solution,
should offer it selfe to you in the tyme
of those exercises of spirit, throw it
confidently away: & belieue that you
shall

30 The II. Treatise. Chap. IV.
shall loose nothing by that, but rather
gaine.

S. Bonauenture sayth: *Scientia qua pro
virtute despiciatur, per virtutem postea me-
lius inuenitur*. That knowledge, which
is forboren for vertues sake, will after-
ward be better found, by meanes of
the same vertue. And the Father Do-
ctor Auila sayth, that when a thought

M. Auila comes to you out of season, the answer
in 3. epist. you make, may be this: My Lord God
commaundes me nothing now concerning
this, and therefore I will not thinke thereof,
if afterward he do, I will be sure to take it
into my care.

Of another help or meanes, which is to per-
forme euery worke, as if it were to be
the last of our life.

C H A P. V.

THE fourth meanes, which the
Saintes assigne, for the doing of
our actions well, is, to performe eue-
ry one of them in such sorte, as if it
were to be the very last of our life. S.
Bernard giuing instruction to one of his
Religious

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 31

Religious, how he should carry himselfe in his actions, sayth thus: *in omni opere suo dicat sibi ipsi, si modo moriturus esses, faceres istud?* Let euery one, in euery action aske himselfe this question. *VVouldst thou do this thing, if thou wert ready to dye? And wouldest thou do it after this manner?* And S. Basil sayth: *Semper ante oculos tuos versetur vltimus dies. Cum enim diluculo surrexeris, ad vesperum te ambigas peruenire, & cum in lectulum ad quiescendum membra tua posueris, noli confidere de lucis aduentu, vt facilius te possis refrenare ab omnibus vitijs.* Which in vulgar, is but that, which is also sayd by that other Saint: *Thou shouldest so dispose of thy selfe in all thinges, as if thou wert instantly to dye. In the morning doe not think that thou shalt liue till night; and at night doe not promise thy selfe life till morning for many dye suddenly.*

Bernard.
in spec.
monitabo-
rum.

Basil
Instruēt.
aa filium
spirituar-
lem.

Thomas a
Kemp.

Antoninus
Abbas.

This is a very efficacious meanes for the doing of thinges well. And therefore we read that the Blessed S. Antony did often repeate this lesson to his Disciples, to animate them towards vertue, and to performe their actions with perfection. And euen that Poet
could

could say: *Omnem crede diem tibi diluxisse supremum*. Conceauē that euery day is the last of thy life. If we all did thinges we doe, as if it were to be the last, and as if we were instantly to dye after it, we should do them with another manner of perfection. O what a Masse would I say, if I conceaued that it should be the last worke of my life, and that I should haue no more tyme, wherein to labour. O what a Prayer would I make, if I conceaued this to be the last, and that I should neuer haue more tyme, wherin to beg Gods mercy, for the pardon of my sinnes. And for this it is, that the Prouerbe sayth: *If thou wilt learne to pray, cast thy selfe into the sea*. For, when a man hath death in his eye, he will then pray to the purpose.

It is recounted of a certaine Religious man, a Priest, and a good seruant of God, that he was wont to confesse himselfe euery day before the saying of Masse; and that one day, falling sicke, his superiour finding, that the disease was mortall, sayd thus to him: *Father, you are very sicke, and you will doe well*

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 33
well to confesse your selfe, as one who is like
to dye. The sicke man, lifting vp his
handes to heauen, made this answer:
Let our Lord be euer blessed and prayesd;
for it is now thirty yeares, since I haue daily
confessed my selfe, as if I had beene instantly
to dye; so that now, I shall need no more, but
to be reconciled, as ordinarily I was for the
saying of Masse. This man walked in a
good way. Euery tyme that we con-
fesse and communicate, it must be, as
if we were them to dye, and so in the
rest of our actions; and by this meanes,
when death arriues, we shall not need
to be wished to confesse our selues, as
being to dye, but to reconcile our sel-
ues as being to communicate. If we
would lead such liues, death could ne-
uer find vs vnprovided, & consequē-
ly neuer takes vs vpon a suddaine; and
this is the best prayer, and the best de-
uotion of all others, against sudden
death. *Beatus ille seruus, quem cum vene* Math. 24.
rit Dominus eius, inuenerit sic facientem, 46.
sayth Christ our Lord. Blessed is that
seruant, whome, when our Lord arri-
ues, he shall find to be watching after
this manner. Thus did holy Iob liue:

34 The II. Treatise. Chap. V.

Iob. 14.
14.

Cunctis diebus, quibus nunc milito, expecto donec veniat immutatio mea. Every day of this whole life of myne, I am looking after the next. I make account that euery day shall be my last: *Vocabis me, & ego respondebo tibi.* Call me, O Lord, when thou wilt, for I am ready to answer and come vpon thy first call.

Tra. 8. c.
20.

One of the best signes, whereby to know, whether or no one be right with God, is, if he be prepared to answer him, whensoever he shall call him in any of the actions, which he is performing. I speake not of infallible certainty; for that, we cannot haue in this life, without particuler reuelatiō: but of morall and probable coniecture, for that we may haue. One of the greatest and chiefest is, to consider, whether you could be well content, that death might seize vpon you at this tyme, and in this coniuncture, and in this very action, which you now performe. Consider whether you be ready to answer God with holy Iob, if he should call you at this instant. Try your selfe often by this prooffe, and aske

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 35
aske your selfe often this question . If
death should come now, would I be glad to
encounter it? And if when I aske my
selfe this question, I find that I shall be
glad of death, euen at that instant, and
whilest I am performing that action, I
may thinke, that I walke well, and I
may remaine with some satisfaction;
but when I find, that I would be sory,
that the houre of the death were at
hand, or that it should light on me,
whilest I were in such a businesse or
imploymēt, but that I would be glad,
that it should forbear me a while, that
so I might see an end of those traces &
toyes, which distract me; this is no
good signe, nay I may hold it for a
cleare testimony, that I am negligent of
my spirituall profit, & that I carry not
my selfe like a good Religious mā. For, *Thomas*
as that Saint saith, if you carried a good *de Kempis.*
conscience, you would not greatly
feare death; and since you feare it so
much, it is a signe, that your conscience
hath remoree of somewhat, and that
your accōt stāds not straight. It is bet-
ter, that you feare sinne then death. The
Steward, who is iust in his accounts,
desires

desires nothing more, then to giue the vp; but he, who is faulty in this kind, feares nothing more, then that his accounts should be called for, and so he is euer making as many excuses, and seeking as much delay, as he can.

Lib. 4. c.
3. vit. P.
Fran. de
Borg.

1. Cor. 15.
31.

Our Father *Francis de Borgia*, was wont to say, that the good exercise of a Religious man was to conceaue himselfe to be at the point of death, foure & twenty times in the day, and that then he found himselfe well, when he could dayly say: *Quotidie morior*. This day I shall dye. Let euery one therefore enter into account, & often examine himselfe vpon this point; And if you conceaue your selfe not to be yet in case to dye, procure to become fit for that passage, and make account that you beg of our Lord, to allow you some few dayes of life for this purposes, and that he grant your sute; and make you vse of this time, and procure so to liue in it, as if you were presently to dye. Happy is that man who liues in such sort, as he would be glad to haue liued, at the houre of his death.

This is one of the most profitable things,

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 37
 thinges, which we vse to preach to our
 neighbours, that so we may draw them
 to liue as they would be found at the
 houre of their death; and that they dis-
 ferre not their cōuersion, through their
 purpose of doing pennance afterward;
 for the day of to morrow is vncertaine,
 and what certainty haue you of being
 then aliue? *S. Gregory sayth: Qui peni-* Thom. d
tentibus veniam spondit, peccantibus cra- Kempis
stinam diem non promissit. Our Lord, who Greg. .ho.
 promised pardon to Penitents, did not 12. in E-
 promise a dayes life to sinners. We are uangel.
 wont to say with much truth, that
 there is nothing more certaine then
 death; nor more vncertayne then the
 houre of death. But yet Christ our
 Lord sayth more then this, in his holy
 Ghospell: *Et vos estote parati, quia qua-*
bora non putatis, Filius hominis ueniet. For Luc. 12
 though he was speaking of the day of 40.
 Iudgement, yet we may with reason
 vnderstand these wordes, of this houre
 of death; because then, shall be the par-
 ticuler iudgement of euery one, & that
 which shall be decreed therein, will
 not be altered, but confirmed in gene-
 rall Iudgement. So that Christ our

Lord sayth, not only, that this houre is vncertaine, and that we know not, when it will arriue; but moreouer, that it will arriue, when we thinke not of it, yea and perhaps when we thinke of it least. Which is the same that *S. Paul*

1. *Thef. 5.* sayth: *Sicut fur in nocte, ita veniet.* And

2. *S. Iohn* in the Apocalyps: *Veniam ad te,*

Apoc. 3. 3. *tamquam fur; & nescies qua hora veniam ad te.* He will come like a theefe in the

night. How theeues giue no warning of themselves, but rather watch for that time, when they may be looked for least. And therefore, by this comparison, Christ our Lord giues vs a lesson, how we are to carry our selues in life, to the end that death enter not vpon vs by way of surprize, and so find vs vnprouided. *Hoc autem scitote, quoniam si*

Luc. 12.

sciret Pater familias, qua hora fur veniret, vigilaret vtique, & non sineret perfodi domum suam. Yf the Maister of the house, knew, when the theefe meant to come, it would suffice, if he prouided himselfe against that time; but because he knowes not the houre, and whether it will be at the first, or second, or third watch; he must be always well awake,

for

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 39
for feare least they scale and robbe his
house. Iust so, sayth he, are you to be
prouided at all times; for else death wil
come, at an houre, when you looke not
for it.

Vpon this occasion the Saints note
that it was a great mercy in our Lord,
to leaue vs so vncertaine, touching the
houre of death, to the end, that we
might alwayes be fit, and ready to en-
tertaine it. For if men had knowne the
certaine time, that security would haue
ministred them occasion of falling into
much carelesnesse, and so of commit-
ting many sinnes. For euen now, with
being vncertaine, & not knowing the
houre of death, men liue after a very
carelesse manner; & what then would
they doe, if they were sure, that they
should not dye so soone? S. Bonauen-
ture sayth, that the reason, why our
Lord would haue vs euer, to be vncer-
taine of the hour of oure death, is to the
end, that we might make light account
of all temporall things, and not intoxi-
cate our selues thereby, since not only
in euery houre, but in euery moment
they may be lost, for so God declared

August.
in Psal.

144. super
illa verba,
Misericors
& misera-
tor Domi-
nus.

Greg. 16.

13. super
Euang.

& lib. 12.

mor. c. 20.

Bonau. de
profectu

Relig. lib.

1. c. 17.

40 The II. Treatise. Chap. V.

Luc. 12.
20.

to that rich couetous man, as *S. Luke* relates, *Stulte, hac nocte animam tuam repent à te. Qua autem parasti, cuius erant?* Thou toole, this very night, thou shall dye, and whose then shall these riches be, which thou hast heaped vp? And thus we may be drawne to place our thoughts and harts vpon that kind of riches, whereof there is neuer to be an end.

Rom. 2.
21.

Now therefore it will be all reason, that since we preach these thinges to others, we take them also to our selues, as the Apostle aduises. *Qui ergo alium doces, te ipsum non doces?* One of the most vsuall temptations, wherewith the Diuel is wont to circumuent men, is that of hiding so cleare and constant a truth from their sight, & of procuring to make them not reflect vpon it, but forget it, and of making them belieue, that there will yet be time enough, both for the one and the other, and that afterward they will mend, and lead a better life afterward; and by this very temptation, doth he also enueagle many Religious, procuring them to deferre the care of profiting in spirit, till their
their

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 41
 their studies be ended, or till they give
 ouer such an office, or till they con-
 clude such a businesse; and that then
 forsooth, they will reduce all their spi-
 rituall exercises into better order, to-
 geather with their pennances and mor-
 tifications. Miserable men, that you are!
 and if you happen to dye in your stu-
 dies, for what wil your learning serue?
 Though yet you grew slacke in vertue
 for the loue thereof, but only for hay &
 straw, which will help you to burne
 the more, in the other life, as the Apo-
 stle sayes. Let vs therefore gather fruit
 by that which we are telling others. *1. Cor. 3.
 12.
 Luc. 4.
 23.*
Medice cura teipsum. Cure you also your
 selfe by this remedy, since you haue
 need thereof.

Of another meanes or help, for the winning
 vs to performe our actions well, which
 is, to make no account, but
 of the present day.

CHAP. VI.

THE fifth meanes or help, which
 will also much assist and animate

vs to performe our ordinary actions well and with perfection, is that we make no account at all, but only of the present day. And though it may seeme, that this meanes and help, is not different from the last, yet indeed it is, as you will perceave by the proceſſe of this discourse. One of the things, which is wont to make men dismay, and grow remiſſe in the way of vertue, and one of the temptations whereby the Diuell procures it, is, by representing that which followes. Is it poſſible, that thou ſhouldeſt be able to walke on ſo many yeares with ſuch a watchfull kind of care, with ſuch punctuality and exactneſſe in all thy workes, to be euer mortifying thy ſelfe, and checking & denying thy guſt, and breaking thy ſelfe of thy will in all things? This, I ſay, the Diuell repreſentes for a point of great difficulty, and that ſuch a life as that, cannot poſſibly be lead, for ſo long a time. And ſo we read of our Bleſſed Father Ignatius; That when he retired himſelfe to do pennance at *Manreſa*, amongſt other temptations wherewith he was aſſaulted by the Diuell, this laſt was

Lib. I. c. 6.
vii. P. N.
Ignatij.

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 43
was one. How will it euer be possible,
that thou canst vndergoe and endure a
life of such austerity, as this, till thou
come to be of seauenty yeares of age;
for so long thou mayst liue? Now a-
gainst this temptation, this is the true
proper remedy. You are not to make
account of many yeares, no nor of
many dayes, but only of that one,
which is present; And this is a meanes,
which carryes much proportion to
our weakenesse; for who in fine,
will not be encouraged and anima-
ted to liue well one day, & to procure,
for his part, that all things may be ex-
actly done. This is that way, which
our Father expounds to vs in our par-
ticular Examen, where euen from one
halfe day to another, he requires vs to
make purposes after this manner: From *Tract. 7.*
this houre till dinner-time, by Gods *6, 7.*
grace, I will proceed with more mode-
sty, or keep silence, or haue patience, &
the like; & thus peraduenture that will
fall out to be very easy and profitable,
which would prooue a burthen full of
difficulty to you, if you vndertooke it
after this absolute manner: *I will neuer*
speake

44 The II. Treatise. Chap. VI.
speake freely; or I will euer go reserved, &
much composed, & retired &c.

*In vita
Patrum.*

That Monke receaued benefit by
this meanes, of whome we read in the
Liues of the Fathers, that he was much
assaulted by a temptation of gluttony.
For when he found himselfe so ouer-
wrought with hunger, and to be so ex-
hausted by it, that he could not endure
it (to the end that he might not infringe
the holy custome of the Monkes, who
were not to eate till three of the after-
noone) he was wont to vse this caution,
and speaking to himselfe, would
say: How sharp soeuer thy hunger be,
what great matter is it, to stay till the
office of the Third Houre be sayd, and
then thou maist be suffered to eate?
When the Third houre was come; he
would say, I will force my selfe a little,
and not eate till the sixth houre: for as
well may I stay now till the sixth, as I
did before till the Third; and so he en-
tertaind himselfe till that time. At the
Sixth houre, he put his bread to steep
in water, & sayd: that this bread may be
well steeped, it will be fit to stay til the
Ninth houre be recited; for since I haue
stayed

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 45

stayed thus long, I will not, for two or three houres more, breake the custome of the Monkes. When the Ninth houre was said, and his prayers ended, he gaue himselfe liberty to eate. Thus he did many dayes, and deceaued himselfe after a sort, by appointing himselfe these short times, till sitting one day at his repast at the Ninth houre, he saw a smoke rise vp out of the little basket, wherein he vsed to keep his bread; and that it went out by the window of his Cell; and in all likelyhood, that was the ill spirit, which had tempted him. For frō that day forward, he neuer felt any such enraged hunger & vnnatural faintnesse as before; so that now he could passe two whole dayes, and not eate any thing, and this without any great trouble. Thus did our Lord reward the warre, which he had suffered, and the victory, which he had obtayned of his enemy.

But we were saying, (and that not without cause) that this, is a help or meanes of much proportion, to our weakenesse; because in fine, we being sickly & faynt, it carryes vs on by little
and

and little, that so we may not be frightened by the face of much difficulty & labour; whereas if we were feruorous & strong, and had great loue of God, there would be no necessity in leading vs after this manner by little paces, to keep vs from discerning the difficulty of the enterprise; because to the true seruant of God, the length of the time, and the multitude of the yeares, is not troublesome; for when once, there is question of doing seruice to Almighty God, he thinkes all tyme to be short, & all labour to be light. *Saint Bernard* expresse this very well. *Non enim ad annum vel ad tempus, instar mercenarij, sed in aeternum, diuino se mancipat famulatui.* The truly iust and holy man, is neither mercenary, nor only workes by the day, yea or by the moneth, or by the yeare, but he offers himselfe with great affection, and without limite and without terme, & obliges himselfe to it for euer.

Bernard.
epist. 151.
ad Abbat.
Gavin.

Psal. 118.
93. & 112.

Audi vocem iusti dicentis: In aeternum non obliuiscar iustificationes tuas; quia in ipsis iustificasti me. Inclinaui cor meum ad faciendas iustificationes tuas, in aeternum. For euer will I serue thee, and neuer will I, O

Lord,

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actions. 47
Lord, lay thy law or thy commaundements and thy counsellis aside. *Non igitur ad tempus, proinde iustitia eius manet, non aliquanto tempore, sed in seculum seculi.* And becaute he offered himselfe, and resolved to serue God in such absolute manner, and without tearme or limit; not saying, *That for a yeare, or for three yeares I will do this;* for that reason shall his recompence, and reward, reach beyond all limit, as farre as Eternity it selfe. *Sempiterna itaque iusticiæ, sempiternam meretur refectionem.* In this sort doth S. Bernard declare that of the Wiseman: *Consummatus in breui, expleuit tempora multa.* The true iust man, liues many yeares in a short time, because he loues God so much, and hath so mighty a desire to do him seruice, that if he were able to liue a hundred yeares, yea or a hundred thousand, he would euer imploy himselfe vpon doing it more & more. And by reason of this desire and determination, it is, as if he had liued all that time after this manner; because God will reward him, according to that determination and desire. These are the valiant and stout men, such as

Iacob

Bernard.
ubi supra.
Sap. 4.
13.

48 The II. Treatise. Chap. VII.

Jacob was, who through the vehement affection, which he carried to *Rachel*; thought it little to serue for her seauen *Genes. 29.* yeares, and then seauen more. *Videban-*
 30. *tur illi pauci dies, præ amoris magnitudine.*

Of another help or meanes, which is the
 accustoming of a mans selfe to
 performe his actions well.

C H A P. VII.

Pythag. **T**H A T great and most ancient
 Philosopher *Pythagoras*, giues an
 excellent aduise to his disciples and
 friends, whereby they might be vertu-
 ous, and vertue become easy & smooth
 to them. He was wont to say thus to
 them: *Let euery one of you, choose some*
good manner of life for himselfe, and wonder
not, if at the first, it may seeme to be trouble-
some and hard; for custome will afterward
make it grow to be easy and full of gust. This
 is a very principall help or meanes,
 whereof we shall do well to serue our
 selues; not so much because it was de-
 liuered by that Philosopher, but be-
 cause it was dictated by the Holy
 Ghost,

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary affliōs. 49
Ghost, as we shall see ere long; and it
is withall of great vse for the obtay-
ning of that to which we pretend. As
for that good manner of life, we haue
chosen it already, or else, to say better,
our Lord hath already chosen vs for
it. *Non vos me eligistis, sed ego eligi vos:* And *Ioan. 15.*
let him eternally be blessed and glori- 16.
fied by vs, for this great fauour; But
yet in this life and state, wherein our
Lord hath placed vs, there may be of
the more, and of the lesse: for you may
be either a perfect Religious man, or
else imperfect and remisse, according to
the manner, wherewith your actions
shall grow to be performed. Yf then
you desire to profit, and obtaine per-
fection, accustome your selues to make
your prayer, as also your other spiritu-
all exercises well; accustome your selfe
to be very punctuall in obedience, and
obseruance of the Rules, and to make
account of little things; accustome your
selues to recollection, mortification,
pennance, modesty and silence; and be
not troubled with the difficulty, which
at the first you may perhaps find there-
in; for custome will make it to grow
D after-

50 The II. Treatise. Chap. VII.
ward not only easy, but very full of
suauity and gust; and you will neuer
be satisfied with giuing God thanks
inough, for hauing enabled you to
breed this custome, in your selues.

We are taught this doctrine, by
the holy Ghost, in many places of holy
Scripture. In the Prouerbes, he sayth:
Prou. 14. 11. Viam sapientia monstrabo tibi: I will shew
thee the way of wisdom, I wil teach
thee how to take gust in the knowled-
ge of God; for that is the meaning of
the word *Wisdom* in holy Scripture.

Bernard. *S. Bernard* sayth: *Sapientia est sapida scien-
tia.* Wisdom is a sauoury kind of know-
ing God. Well then, sayth he, I will
teach thee, how thou shalt get delight
& gust in the knowledge, & lōue, &
seruice of Almighty God: *Ducam te per
semitas aquinatis; quas cum ingressus fueris.
non arctabuntur gressus tui, & currens non
habebis offendiculum.* I will conduct thee
first by the narrow and pathwayes of
vertue, (which he therefore rearmeth
so, because vertue at the first, seemes
a little hard-fauourd in our sight; by
reason of our ill inclination, and so the
path seemes narrow to vs) but after-
ward,

Of the perfection of our ordinary actions. 51
 ward, when thou art past the narrow
 entrance of the way, thou wilt find
 thy selfe to be at large, and to go with
 much gust, and at great ease: yea and
 thou wilt be able to runne without
 stumbling vpon any impediment at al.
 The Holy Ghost by this Metaphore,
 doth most elegantly teach vs, that
 though we may find difficulty in our
 beginnings, to enter vpon the way of
 vertue & perfection, we must not yet
 be dismayd therewith, by reason that
 afterward we shall not onely find no
 difficulty therein, but great content-
 ment and gust, and ioy; and we shall
 grow to say: *Quia modicum laboraui, & Eccl. 41.
 inueni mihi multam requiem.* I haue taken 31.
 a little paynes, and afterward I found
 my selfe in great ease. The same also
 is repeated in the 6. Chapter of Eccle-
 siasticus: *In opere enim ipsius, exiguum la- Eccl. 6. 20
 borabis, & cito edes de generationibus illius.*
 You shall labour but a little, and then
 shortly you shall eate, and enioy the
 fruit thereof. And the Apostle S. Paul
 teacheth vs also this very thing: *Omnis Heb. 12.
 autem disciplina, in presenti quidem vide-
 tur non esse gaudij, sed maroris; postea autem*

§ 1 The II. Treatise. Chap VII.

*sem fructum pacatissimum exercitatis per
eam, reddet iustitia.* All order and disci-
pline, and al good exercises, at the be-
ginning seeme painefull and hard, and
to carry a kind of melancholy about
them; but afterward, by custome and
vse, they grow not only to be easy, but
to be delightfull and sweet. And so
we may also see, in all sciences & arts,
that the study thereof is so hard in the
beginning, that many tymes the schol-
lars are carryed to it by force; and it is
growen to be a Prouerbe, That, *Rea-
ding is gotten with bloud*; but when by
exercise, a man growes profiting and
learning, he takes so much liking and
gust to it, that he hath not in the whol
world so great an entertainement and
recreation, as to be studying; and iust
so it is, in the way of vertue and Per-
fection.

S. Bernard goes declaring this very
Bern. lib. well, by occasion of those wordes of
de conside. Job: *Qua prius nolebas tangere anima mea,*
ad Aug. *nunc pra angustia cibi mei sunt.* Will you
Job. 6. 7. know, sayth he, what effects, vse and
custome hath, and of how great force
it is: *Premium tibi importabile videbitur u-*
liquid

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 53
liquid ; processu temporis , si assuescas indicabis non adeo graue ; paulò post , & leue senties ; paulò post nec senties paulò post , etiam delectabit. At the beginning , a thing will seeme so very hard to you, that you are not able to beare it ; but if you accustome your selfe , it will then seeme not so hard as it was ; within a short tyme after , it will seeme easy & light, and you shall euen hardly feele it ; and afterward, you will not feele it at all ; and within a while after that, you will not only not feele it, but you will take so much contentment & gult in it , as that you will say with *Iob*, The thing which my hart did first abhorre, & which I durst not so much as looke in the face , but it caused horrour to me, this is now growen my nourishment and food, and it becomes sweet and saoury to me . So that all dependes in this, vpon custome , and therefore at the first you find it hard perhaps, to obserue the additions, and documents of your Prayer, and of your Examen, because you haue not the custome thereof ; and therefore it is hard for you to locke vp your imagination,

54. The II. Treatise. Chap. VII.

in such sort, as that it may not wander abroad where it will, as soone as you wake, and at the tyme of your Prayer, because you haue neuer beene vsed to restraine and bridle it, that so it might thinke of nothing, but vpo what you are to meditate. And for this reason, at the first, recollection & silence breeds melancholy and sadnesse in you, because you haue vsed it little, and the corner to which you are accustomed, is pleasing to you; and that other, where you are a stranger, is troublesome; but vse it, and accustome your selfe to it, and it will grow to be pleasing. For this reason is fasting & praying so hard to secular mē, because they are not accustomed to it. King Saul put armour vpon David, to the end, that he might fight with the Philistian, but he hauing not the vse therof, could not so much as walke with it; and so he left it: but afterward, when he had accustomed himself to armes, he fought wel with them. And that which I say of vertue and goodnesse, the same I say also of wickednesse and vice; for if you suffer your selfe to be carried away

Thom. de
Kempis.

1. Reg. 17
38.

Of the perfection of our ordinary actions. 55
way by an ill custome, it will increase
and get more strength in you; and the
remedy thereof will be very difficult,
and you may perhaps be engaged by it,
all your life. O that you had accusto-
med your selues to performe thinges
well from the very beginning, how
rich would you find your selues now,
and how full of ioy by your seeing,
that vertue & goodnesse was growen
so easy and sweet to you. Consider,
but what contentment a man finds in
hauing left the custome of swearing,
and with what facility and ease he a-
uoides so many mortall finnes. Well
then, beginne to accustome your selues
euen from the present, to performe all
your ordinary actions exactly well;
for, better late then neuer. Take it to
hart, since it importes you so much, &
employ if need be your particuler ex-
amen to this very point, which will be
one of the best, that you can be able to
make; and thus will the performing al
your actions with perfection, become
easy and delightfull to you.

How much it imports a Religious man not to grow faint in the way of vertue.

CHAP. VIII.

BY that which is already sayd, it may be well vnderstood, how much it will import a Religious man to conserue himselfe in deuotion, and to go euer on with seruour in the exercise of Religion, & not to suffer himselfe to fall into remissenesse and negligence, because if he do, it will afterward be very hard for him to get out from thence. God Almighty indeed can cōmaund, that he grow afterward to lead a seruorous and perfect life; but it would be a kind of miracle to see it. *Saint Bernard* expresses this very well, when he writes to *Richard* the Abbot of *Fountaines*, and his Religious, vpon whome God had wrought this miracle, that they till that tyme hauing lead a kind of negligent and carelessse life, he had chaunged their harts and made them liue after a very seruorous & perfect manner. The Saint reioyce,

Bernard.
epist. 96.

Of the perfection of our ordinary actions. 57
ioyces, & wonders extremely at this,
and congratulating it with them, sayth
thus: *Dignus Dei est iste. Quis dabit mihi*
ut transeam, & videam visionem hanc ma-
gnam. This is no lesse then the finger
of God, and who wil now make me so
happy, as that I may be able to go, and
see this wonder like another *Moyes*. *Nec*
enim minus mira, minusve iucunda ista pro-
motio est, quam illa. For this is not a lesse
wonder, then that which *Moyes* saw
of the Bush, which burned and consu-
med not: *Rarissima avis in terra est, qui*
de gradu quem fortè in Religione semel atti-
gerit, vel parùm ascendat. It is a most rare
and extraordinary thing for a man to
aduanee and rayse himselfe beyond
that degree or classe, wherein he hath
once settled himselfe in Religion. *Mul-*
tò facilius reperies, multos seculares conuer-
ti ad bonum, quem vnum quempiam de Re-
ligiosis transire ad melius. You shall much
more easily find many secular men cō-
uerted from vice to vertue, then any
one Religious man to ryse vp from a
negligent and tepide life, to another
which is feruorous and perfect. And
the reason heereof is, because secular

men haue not such continuall recourse to remedies, as Religious haue; and so the former, when they heare an excellent sermon, when they see the suddaine and disastrous death of a neighbour or friend; that nouelty breedes a wonder and admiration in them: and this winnes them to change and mend their liues.

But now the Religious man, who swims in such a world of helps; such frequent vse of Sacramentes, so many spirituall exhortatiōs, so great exercise and vse of meditating vpon things belonging to God, and to reflect vpon death, vpon the last Iudgement, vpon the torments of hell, and the glory of heauen; if with all this, he continue negligent and carelesse stil, what hope can a man euer haue, that he wil grow to mend? For his ears are already made to the hearing of these thinges; and so that which ought to help and moue him, and which indeed helps, and moues others, makes no impressiō at all in him.

This is also the reason of that sentence of *S. Augustine*, which is celebrated

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 59
ted so much : *Ex quo Deo seruire capi,*
quomodo difficile expertus sum meliores,
quàm qui in Monasterijs profecerunt : ita
non sum expertus peiores, quàm qui in Mo-
nasterijs ceciderunt. Since I grew to ser-
ue God, as I haue knowne no better
men, then such as haue profited in Re-
ligion, so haue I knowne none worse,
then such as haue fallen in that state.
S. Bernard sayth, that very few of them
who haue fayled and fallen in Religi-
on, returne to that degree and state,
which they had before ; but rather go
on from ill to worse ; ouer whome he
sayth, that the Prophet Hieremy lamets
in these wordes : *Quomodo obscuratum*
est aurum, mutatus est color optimus? How
is that most pure gold, come to obscure
it selfe ? How is that colour chaunged
which was so bright ? How is that an-
cient beauty faded ? *Qui nutriebantur in*
croceis, amplexati sunt stercorea. They
who were bred in purple, and were
wont to repose in precious beds, they
who were wont to be so regaled by
Almighty God in prayer, and whose
whole negociation and conuersation
was in heauen, are now grown to
wallow

Aug. epist.
ad plebem
Hisp. onens.

Bern. ser.
1. in festo
Apost. Pe-
tri & Pau-
li.

Thren. 4.
1. & 5.

wallow in dung, and to take delight in myre & filth.

So that, ordinarily speaking, there is little hope of such as grow to shrink and impair themselves when they are in Religion, which is a thing, that should put vs into great feare of our selues. And the reason hereof is, that which we haue already toucht, because these men grow sicker euen by that very phisicke, & those very remedies, wherby they were to haue beene rayfed and cured, and therefore if they grow worse by those meanes, wherby others are wont to recouer themselves, what hope can be had of their redresse? That kind of sick man, vpon whome not only his phisicke will not worke, but wherewith he findes himselfe worse, may well be thought to be in a desperate case. And for this reason we make so great reflection, and haue so much apprehension of the fall and sinne of a Religious man, much more then of secular people. When a Doctour findes a great dismay, or an extraordinary weaknes of pulse in a sickly person, it puts him not to so much

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actions. 61
much care, because that carries no disproportion to the ordinary disposition of his patient; but whensoever he sees this, in a man of a sound body, & of a prosperous constitution, he holdes it for a very ill signe, because such an accident at that, cannot be brought to expresse it selfe without some predominant malignity neere the hart, which prognosticates some dangerous sicknesse, if not death. And iust so it passes in our case; for if a secular man fall into sinne, these are accidents, which are not so incompatible with the carelesse life of such worldly persons, as resort to few remedies and walke daily in the midst of occasions, which help them on to sinne; but now for a Religious man, who is supported by such frequent vse of Sacraments, by so continuall prayer, and so many other holy exercises, to fall into any grievous sinne, is a signe, that the very strength of his soule is much wasted, & that his disease is settled, and therefore there is much cause of feare.

But yet I speake not this, saith S. Bernard, to the end, that you should
grow

Bernard.
ubi supra.

grow into despayre, especially if you will dispose your selfe to rise quickly; for I must tell you, that the longer you stay, the harder you will find the taske, but I tell you of it, to the end that you may not fall, nor sinne, no nor yet grow negligent in Gods seruice. But yet, if any man should happen to fall, we haue a good Aduocate of Iesus Christ, who is able to do that for vs, which we cannot do for our selues. *Filioli mei, hac scribo vobis, vt non peccetis; sed & si quis peccauerit, Aduocatum habemus apud Patrem, Iesum Christum, iustum.* Let no man therefore despayre: for if he returne with his whole hart to God, infallibly he shall find mercy. Yf the Apostle *S. Peter*, hauing followed the schoole of Christ so long time, and hauing beene so highly fauoured by him, did yet so fowly fall, and after that grieuous sinne of hauing denyed his Maister and his Lord, did yet returne to so high and eminent a state in Gods fauour, who will euer find in his hart to despayre? Perhaps, sayth *Saint Bernard*, thou hast sinned abroad in the world, more then *S. Paul*; perhaps thou hast sinned heere in Religion

Of the perfection of our ordinary action. 63
gion, more then S. Peter; but now both
these, because they repented and did
pennance for their sinnes, did not only
obtaine pardon thereof, but they came
to a most eminent sanctity and perfecti-
on. Do you also thus; and so you may
returne, not only to your former state,
but moreouer, to be very perfect.

*How much it importes Nouices to profit in
the time of their Nouiceship, and to
accustome themselves therein,
to performe the exercises
of their Religion
exactly.*

C H A P. IX.

H E R E B Y we may obserue con-
cerning Nouices, how much it
importes them, to profit in the time of
their Nouitiat, and to accustome them-
selves therein, to the exact performance
of the exercises of Religion; which
may also be of vse to all them, who are
beginners in the way of vertue. The
first rule, which we haue in the Socie-
ty, concerning the Maister of the No-
uices

64 The II. Treatise. Chap. VI.

Regul. 1.

Magi 7.

Nouitior.

uices, declares this to vs well, and in few wordes, which speakes not only to vs, but to all Religious: *Rem esse magni momenti sibi commissam intelligat, quandoquidem ex prima Nouitiorum institutione pendet, maiori ex parte, eorumdem profectus; spes nostra Societatis, in Domino.* The matter of the Nouices is to vnderstand, that they haue recommended a businesse of very great importance to his care. And this is proued by two very substantiall reasons, to the end that he may open his eyes, and consider, of how great weight & moment that is, which he hath in charge. The first is, because, (ordinarily speaking) all the future profit of Nouices in the way of spirit, dependes vpon their first instruction and institution. The second is, because all the hope of the progresse and good of the Society, doth also depend thereupon. But now, descending to a more particuler declaration of these reasons, I say first, that from this first institution, and from that posture, wherein a man shall haue put himselfe in his Nouice-ship, doth ordinarily proceed either his progresse or regresse, from that

tyme

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 65
time forward, as we shewed in the last
Chapter. In so much as that if in the
time of a mans Nouice-ship, he be ne-
gligent and carelesse of his spirituall
good, in all likelyhood, he will still
continue the same; and it is not to be
conceaued, that he will be more seruo-
rous and carefull afterward, for no rea-
son obliges vs to belieue, that there wil
be any change in him to the better, but
many, which make vs feare the direct
contrary.

To the end that we may see this
the better, let vs now speake in parti-
cular with the Nouice, and let vs pon-
der the reasons, and conuince him by
them. In these yeares of your Nouice-
ship, you haue much time to attend to
your owne only spirituall profit, and
you are accommodated with many
meanes, which serue to this end; For
Superiours apply themselves wholly
to this: and to this is their chiefe office
and ayme. You haue now, many ex-
amples of others whose businesse is the
same with yours; and it is a thing,
which giues a man great hart and life,
to conuerse and liue with such as treat

of no other thing but this; for to see others go farre before, will oblige a man to follow after, how lazy soeuer he may be. Now your hart is disentangled, and not engaged in other things; yea and now your desire is also in all apparence, to acquire vertue, and there is no occasion on foot to diuert you; but many to conduct and carry you on. If therefore now, when you are heere for this alone, and haue no other thing to do, you will not yet profit your selfe, and lay vp some good stocke of vertue, what will become of you heereafter; when your hart will be possessed with other thinges, and scattered a thousand wayes. Yt now with so great exemption from businesse, and with so many conueniencies and particular helpes, you make not your Prayer and Examinations well, not be carefull to obserue your Additions, nor to performe your other spirituall Exercises exactly; in what case will you be, when you shall haue a thousand other cares, about your studie, and afterward about hearing Confessions, and making Sermons, and complying with other obligations? Yf

NOW

Of the perfectio of our ordinary actiōs. 67
now you profit not, with so many spiri-
tuall discourses, and exhortations, &
by so many examples, which do euen
vrge and thrust you on; how will the
world go with you, when you shall
haue many occasions & impediments
to distract you? If now in the begin-
ning of your conuersion, when euen
the nouelty of thinges, should moue
a greater deuotion and feruour in you;
you are yet but luke-warme; what wil
you be hereafter, when your eares will
haue beene already glutted & beaten,
by often hearing of all such things, as
might be likely to moue you? Yea &
I say yet more; If now, when your
passion doth but beginne to bud, and
your ill inclination is not yet deeply
rooted, as being yet but in the begin-
nings, you be not able to resist it,
through the difficulty, which you find
therein; how will you euer be able to
repell and conquer it, when it shall be
already deeply rooted, and will haue
gotten strength by custome, so that it
will be a kind of death for you to alter
your course? S. Dorotheus declares this, *Dorothe.*
by an example, which he bringt, from *doct. 129*

one of those ancient Fathers. One day he was with his disciples, in a field full of Cypres trees of all sortes; some very great, and some very little; and others of a middle size, and he commaunded one of his disciples, to plucke one of those Cypresses vp, by the roote, and he did so, instantly; for the tree was yong. Then he bad him plucke vp another, which was somewhat bigger, & he plucked it also vp, but yet with more labour and payne, and was faine to vse both his hands. For the third, he needed a fellow, and there were yet some trees, which they all put rogeather could not yet plucke vp. Vpon this the good old man said thus to them: Iust thus are your passions in the beginning, before they haue taken deep roote, it is an easy matter to subdue them, and any little force will be sufficient for it: but when, by meanes of custome, they haue layd their rootes moore deep, it will then be very hard, and there will be need to put a great deale of strength to it, before you can vtterly roote them

vp. **H**oerdy you may perceave, how
great

Of the perfection of our ordinary actions. 69
great an error, and how dangerous a
temptation it is, for a man to delay his
spirituall profit, & to thinke, that here-
after, he will be able to mortify and
ouercome himselfe in that, vpo which
he dares not venture now, by reason of
the difficulty, which he findes therein.
But now if when the difficulty is lesse,
you dare not attempt it, how will you
presume to do it, when it shall be great-
ter? If now, when your passion is but
like some little Lyons whelp, you be
cowardly, what will you be, when it
increases, and when it growes to be a
furious and mighty beast? And there-
fore know and take it for granted, that
if now you be tepid and remisse, you
will be remisse and tepid afterward,
and if now you will not be a good ap-
prentise & Novice, you will not here-
after be a good ancient Religious man,
nor a good Operarius? Yf now, you be
negligent in obedience, and in the ob-
seruance of your Rules, hereafter you
will be more remisse. Yf now you be
negligent in the performing of your
spirituall exercises, and if you dispatch
them vntowardly, and by halues, you
will

70 The blisfull life. Chap. XL
will be but a bungler; all the dayes of
your life. The chiefe point consists, in
how you settle to your businesse at the
first. The businesse of making good
dow, they say, consists much in the

Bonau. in kneading; and Saint Bonauenture sayth,
spec. Disc. *Formam, quam primo qui recipit, nix depa-*

nit; Et qui disciplinam in noua conuersa-
tionis initio negligit, ad eam postmodum dif-
ficile applicatur. In that wheresoever a man
first beginnes to settle himselfe it is vsu-
all for him to remayne. And it is but an
yntoward peace of businesse, when a
man, who is old, applyes himselfe to
thinges, to which he accustomed not
himselfe when he was yong. It is a
Prouerbe, and a Prouerbe of the Holy

Prou. 22. Ghosts makinge; Prouerbū in est, sayth
6. Salomon: *Adolescens iuxta viam suam, etia-*

am cum senuerit non recedet ab ea. When
a man being yong, is accustomed to
walke in such a way, he will not for-
sake it, euen when he is old. And here
upon it was, that S. Iohn Climacus came
to say, that it was a very dangerous and
fearefull thing, for a man to be loose &
negligent in his beginnings, because,
sayth he, it is an euident signe of a fu-

ture

Climac. de
manu u-
te fuga.
grad. 1.

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actions. 7
 ture fall. For this, it therefore, highly
 importes, that a man beginne at the ve-
 ry first, to accustom himsele to vertue,
 and to the exact performance of his spi-
 rituall exercises. And so doth the holy
 Ghost aduise vs by the Prophet Ieremie: *Tren. 3.*
Bonum est viro, cum portauerit iugum ab a- 27.
dolescentia sua. It is a happynesse for a
 man to vse himselfe to the yoke euen
 from his youth; for so he will carry it
 well afterward, & so vertue and good-
 nesse will prooue easy to him, which
 otherwise will be hard. *Qua in iuuentute* *Eccli. 25.*
tua non congregasti, quomodo in senectute tua 5.
inuenies? How can you expect to find
 that in your old age, which you gathe-
 red not together, in your youth. From
 this first reason, the second flowes: For
 if all the future spirituall profit of the
 Religious, depend vpon his first insti-
 tution; the whole good state of his Re-
 ligion will also depend thereon. For a
 Religion is not the walles of houses or
 Churches, but the Congregation or
 Community of the Religious; & they
 who are in Nouitiate from time to time
 are they, who be afterward, to make
 vp the whole body of the Religion.

For this reason, our Society did not content it selfe with instituting Seminarie and Colledges, where our subiects are ioynedly brought vp in learning & vertue; but it instituted also Seminarie for vertue alone; Where men are wholly to attend to the abnegation and mortification of themselves; and to the exercise of all true and solide vertue, as a foundation yet more principall, then that of learning is. For this end, are the houses of probation; which as our Father *Franciscus de Borgia* sayd, is to the Nouices, a very *Bethlehem*, which is interpreted *Domus Panis*. A house of bread. For heere is that prouision layd in, and here is that bisket made for our navigation, through those great and many dangers, which expect vs. This is our August, this the time of our abundance, these are our yeares of fertility, wherin we are to lay vp plenty and store for the future yeares of scarcity and dearth, as

Franc. de Borgia in Epist. ad Societatem.

Gene. 41.
48.

Ioseph did. O that they of *Aegypt*, had rightly vnderstood, and fallen vpon the iust account, and reflected truly vpon it; for they would not then, haue made such hast, to scatter, that which

Ioseph

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 73
 Ioseph gathered together, and layd vp.
 And O, that you would know, and
 cast vp by iust account how much it wil
 concerne you, to go full stored out of
 your Probation! you would certainly
 then haue no desire, to go quickly out,
 but rather you would lament, when
 you depart; as considering how ill you
 may go prouided of vertue and mortifi-
 cation from hence. And therefore our
 Father *Borgia* says, that they, who de-
 sire, and are glad to go quickly out of
 their Nouitiate, giue prooffe, that they
 know not themselues, and that they
 are not capable of vnderstanding, the
 necessity wherein they are of being
 better stored. And they are likely not
 to esteeme of the iournyes end, so well
 as they ought, since at their going out;
 they haue no more feare of wanting
 prouision by the way. O how richly
 furnished with vertue, did our blessed
 Father imagine that we would be;
 when we were to go forth of the No-
 uitiare; for so he supposes in the Con-
 stitutions. He appoints two yeares for
 making the Probation, and the Expe-
 riments; to the end that a man may ne-

4. p. C. 11.
 c. 4. §. 2.

negotiate his spirituall profit, without seeing any other bookes, or thinking of any other study, then only that, which may conduce to his growing in abnegation, & all perfection of vertue. And then, supposing that they passe on out of their Nouiceship, so spirituall, so feruorous, and so cordially affected to mortification and recollection, and so addicted to prayer, and all spirituall things, that it would be needfull to carry a hand ouer them; the direction, which he giues, when they go to the Colledges is, that they temper their seruours during the tyme of their studies, and that their Prayers and mortifications may not exceed so much. So that, our Blessed Father, presupposes, that a Nouice goes out of the Probation, with so great light, with so great knowledge of God, and contempt of the world; and that he partes from thence, so full of tenderesse and deuotion, and so vehemently carryed away to the very kernell and hart of spirituall thinges, that it would be necessary to moderate his seruour by his Superiours care. And now therefore, do you procure,

Of the perfectiō of our ordinary actiōs. 75
procure, to go hence in this manner;
and make good vse of this time, which
is so precious; that perhaps in your
whole liues, you will not find the like,
for your soules good, and for the ac-
quiring and accumulating of spirituall
riches for your soules. *Let not this time*
pass idely away, and loose not any one mo-
ment thereof. Non defrauderis à die bono, &
particula boni doni non te pratereat.

Eccle. 14.

14.

One of the great fauours, which
our Lord imparts to them, whome he
drawes in their tender age to Religi-
on, and for which they owe infinite
thanks to his diuine Maiesty, is, be-
cause it is then, a very easy thing for
them to apply themselues to vertue,
and to the discipline of Religion. At
the first, when a tree is yong and ten-
der, you may easily addresse it in such
sort, as to make it grow vp, in great
beauty; but if you let it grow, and that
it proue to be crooked and vntoward,
you may breake it, before you be able
to set it streight, and thus it will con-
tinue, whilst it is a tree. And so in ten-
der yeares; it is easy to apply, and ad-
dresse a soule to goodnesse; and he, who

is vsed to it from a little one, findes it both easy for the present, and durable for the future tyme. It is a good thing, for cloth to be dyed in the wooll; for then the coulour will not shrinke, nor fade. *Saint Hierome* asks this question: Who can be able to restore the former whitenesse, to a skarlet, dyed in the wooll? And that Poet, sayd: *Quo semel est inbuta recens, servabit odorem & testa diu.* The new por keepes the odour of that likour a long tyme, which was powred into it, first. And the holy Scripture prayses King *Iosias*, Because he beganne to serve God in his childhood. *Omni adhuc esset puer & cepit adorare Deum; Patri sui David.*

Hieron.

2. Paral.

34. 3.

Vmbertus.

Vmbertus an eminent person and Generall of the Order of the Preachers, relates how a Religious man appeared after death, diuerse nights, full of splendour and beauty, to another Religious his companion, and conducting him out of his Cell, made him see a great number of men apparelled in white, and shining garments; and sayth, that they carried certaine beautifull crosses vpon their shoulders, and

Of the perfection of our ordinary actions. 77
and so went as in procession towards
heauen. Soone after this, he saw an-
other Procession more gracifull and
delightfull then the former, where e-
uerie one also, carried a very rich and
a very beautifull Crosse, and not vpon
their shoulders, as the former did, but
in their hands. Shortly againe after this,
he saw yet a third procession, which
was incomparably more excellent the
the former, and the Crosse, which
they carried, did very farre exceede
those others, in all glorie and beaurie;
and these were not carried, either vpon
shoulders, or in hands, but before e-
uerie one of the Procession, there was
an Angell who guided and carried the
Crosse, that so the rest might follow
the more at ease full of ioy. The Reli-
gious Man, who saw this vision, desi-
red his Companion to vnfolde it to
him. He did so; and sayde, that the
first, who carried the Crosse vpon
their backes, were they, who entred
into religion, when they were growen
in yeares; and the second, who carried
them in their hands, were such as had
entred, when they were yong men.

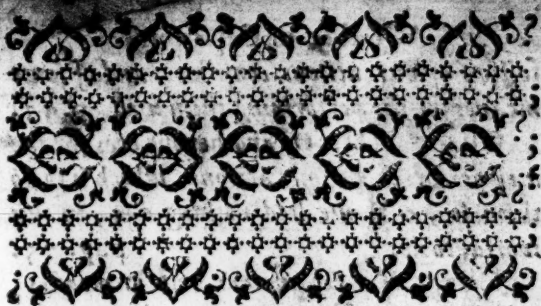
But

But the last, who went so full of glee
and ioy, were they, who in their first
and tender age, had embraced Reli-
gious life, and renounced the world.

Laus Deo & Deiparae.

27 AP 58





THE TABLE
OF
CHAPTERS
CONTAYNED

in this second Treatise.

Chap. I. **T**hat our profit and perfection
consists in the exact performāce
of our ordinary actions. pag. 1.

Chap. II. That we are to be greatly ani-
mated towards Perfection, in regard, that
God hath placed it in things, which are very
easy. pag. 10.

Chap. III. In what goodnesse and per-
fection.

A Table of Chapters

section of our actions consistes, and of some
meanes for the performing them well. p. 15.

Chap. IIII. Of another meanes for the
well performing of our actions, which is to do
them so, as if we had nothing else, in this
world, to do. pag. 25.

Chap. V. Of another help or meanes,
which is to performe euery worke, as if it
were to be the last of our life. pag. 30.

Chap. VI. Of another meanes or help,
for the winning vs to performe our actions
well, which is, to make no account, but of
the present day. pag. 41.

Chap. VII. Of another help or meanes,
which is the accustoming of a mans selfe to
performe his actions well. pag. 48.

Chap. VIII. How much it imports a
Religious man not to grow faint in the way of
vertue. pag. 56.

Chap. IX. How much it importes No-
uices to profit in the time of their Nouice-ship,
and to accustome themselues therein, to per-
forme the Exercises of their Religion exa-
ctly. 27 AP 58 pag. 63.

FINIS.

